

A

CONVERSATIONAL COMMENTARY,

COMBINING THE

QUESTION-BOOK AND EXPOSITION.

DESIGNED FOR

BIBLE CLASSES, SUNDAY SCHOOLS, AND FAMILIES.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAPTERS I—XIV.

BY

WILLIAM HAGUE.

In these discourses, the Holy Spirit is at work, and the seeds of truth sparkle and flourish. They are by nature, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, and have been excited. By conversation, they are brought forth, and become the property of the soul, when put in motion, they strike and wound, and others, and produce life in the soul on both sides.—Dr. WATTS.

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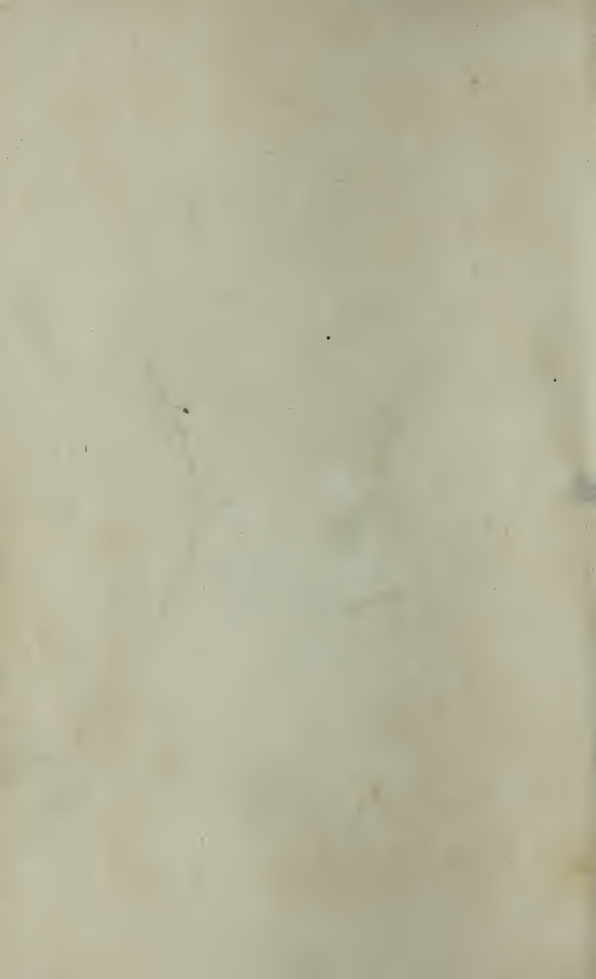
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In free discourse, new thoughts are struck out, and the seeds of truth sparkle and blaze, which in calm and silent reading would never have been excited. By conversation, you both give and receive this benefit; as flints, when put in motion, and striking against each other, produce living fire on both sides.—DR. WATTS.

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P R E F A C E .

THE success of the two volumes entitled "A Guide to Conversation on the New Testament" has encouraged the author, after considerable delay, and many solicitations, to proceed with the work. Its design is to combine in one volume the advantages of a COMMENTARY and QUESTION BOOK, in the style of conversation for purposes of instruction. The teacher who would give instruction in any department of knowledge so as to awaken in his scholar a spirit of inquiry can not easily satisfy himself with abrupt and insulated questions; in order to arouse the mind to action, and bring himself into sympathy with it, he must *communicate* something. The remark which imparts knowledge quickens thought, excites inquiry, and then conversa-

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tion proceeds with a natural and easy flow. A large proportion of the truths made known by our Saviour were uttered in the form of familiar conversations; and the instructor who will most closely imitate "the Great Teacher" in this respect, will be likely to garner the richest harvest of fruits from the field of his labor.

A

CONVERSATIONAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.

LESSON I.—1-14.

Introduction—Christ's Interviews with the Apostles after his Resurrection—Commands them to wait in Jerusalem for the Coming of the Holy Spirit—His Ascension—The Address of the Angels—The Reassembling of the Church.

IN the year 33 of the Christian era, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, forty days after he had risen from the dead, stood on Mount Olivet, and there commissioned his apostles to go forth and promulgate his religion among the nations of the earth. They obeyed his command, and this book, as its title shows, gives an account of a portion of their doings. It is to be regarded, therefore, as a connecting link between the gospels and the epistles. It is an authentic church history, written in the age of the apostles by one of their companions and fellow-laborers.

1. To whom is this book dedicated? What "former treatise" is addressed to the same person? Luke i. 3. This introduction points out the author of this history;—

what was his name? He was not an apostle;—what was his profession? Col. iv. 14. He has not attempted to write a *complete* history of the early churches, but a book of *memoirs* relating to the first missionaries and founders of the churches. Whose life and teachings were the subject of the former work?

2. To what particular day did the former history reach? The event here mentioned took place on Thursday, the fortieth day after the resurrection;—do you remember who were the witnesses of it? After the resurrection Jesus conferred on the apostles an extraordinary and supernatural gift;—what was it? John xx. 22. What was the effect of that gift on the minds of these men? John xiv. 26. We see, then, that they were *inspired* men. By means of that gift many instructions could be imparted without the use of vocal sounds. Before his ascension, in what form did Christ leave his instructions?

3. How long did Christ remain on the earth after his resurrection? Is there any reason to think that this length of time was regarded as a sacred period? Deut. ix. 9; 1 Kings xix. 8; Mark i. 13. What seems, from this verse, to have been the object of our Saviour in remaining thus long on the earth? [Observe here that there are recorded **NINE** separate appearances of Christ to his disciples after his resurrection: (1.) To Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary.” Matt. xxviii. 1–9. (2.) To the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 15. (3.) To Peter. Luke xxiv. 34. (4.) To ten of the apostles, while Thomas was absent. John xx. 19. (5.) To the eleven apostles. John xx. 26. (6.) To seven of the apostles at the Sea of Tiberias, called by some “the small meeting in Galilee.” John xxi. 4. (7.) To the five hundred brethren, or what is called by some “the large meeting in Galilee.” 1 Cor. xv. 6,

and Matt. xxviii. 7 and 16; compared also with Matt. xxvi. 32, and Mark xvi. 7 (8.) To James. 1 Cor. xv. 7. (9.) On the day of ascension, when the apostles were assembled together at the last interview. Luke xxiv 50.] Were the intervals between these appearances of Christ long enough to afford opportunity for a calm comparison of the facts? Now why are the proofs which Christ furnished of his resurrection called “infallible?” At these interviews what were the subjects of Christ’s teachings? Can you see from this verse any special reason why we should prize the *writings* of the apostles? Can you see why we should regard their *practices* as expressive of the will of Christ?

4. After the crucifixion of Christ the disciples were scattered;—who assembled them again? Where did they meet? Doubtless it was expected by the Jewish government that they would abandon that place forever. It is not unlikely that they wished to leave it;—why so? For what were they commanded to wait there? What promise had been made to them on that subject? John xiv. 16, 17, and xvi. 7. The knowledge of the fact that the apostles began their work in that very place has aided much in convincing thousands of the truth of Christianity;—can you think in what way it has done so?

5. By whom had Christ’s disciples been baptized before they followed him? By whom had Christ himself been baptized? Had Christ baptized any one in water? John iv. 2. But he spoke of a baptism which HE would confer, superior in its nature to any that they had received;—what was that? On what sacred festival did this superior baptism come? That was *ten* days after Christ’s ascension. The phrase, “baptism of the Holy Ghost,” denoted a large measure of the Spirit’s influence. The idea which the words would convey to a person who heard them in

that age and country, might be illustrated by an expression of Cyril of Jerusalem, who wrote about 1500 years ago. He says: "As he who is baptized in water is encompassed on every side, so are they that are wholly baptized by the Spirit."* Did John himself predict this superior baptism? Mark i. 8.

6. At some meeting after the resurrection of Christ they asked an interesting question of him;—what was it? They expected that the Messiah's kingdom would come with great *worldly* power. The prophecies respecting that kingdom had raised their expectations, but they did not understand them truly;—can you mention some of those predictions? Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xxvii. 6; Dan. vii. 27. The ideas of the disciples on this subject, which they had cherished from their youth, prevailed in the nation generally;—what effect had the miracles of Christ on this worldly feeling? John vi. 15. The crucifixion of Christ had crushed this hope;—why did the appearance of a *risen* Saviour revive it?

7. What answer did the Saviour give to this question? That answer admits that the expectation of a glorious kingdom yet to come was in some sense just;—on what one point did it discourage inquiry? On *what ground* is inquiry discouraged? What important distinctions did Moses inculcate in regard to this subject? Deut. xxix. 29.

8. In further answering their question, Christ makes a special *promise* to them, and lays out their *work* for the promotion of his kingdom;—what is the promise? The word translated "power" in this sentence is not the same as the one so rendered in verse 7. That denotes *jurisdiction*; this means *energy*. How was this energy to be imparted? Whence was it to proceed? Luke xxiv. 49. What *out-*

* Catechesis xvii. sect. 8.

ward effects would this energy produce? Mark xvi. 17, 18. What *inward* effects? John xiv. 26. How extensive was the field of their work? Why were three places particularly named? If they had not been named, why might the disciples have been loth to go to them? In what respect does this commission differ from one which Christ had given before? Matt. x. 5. The apostles were not directed to go through the world as warriors;—but in what character? By what means were they to conquer? Rev. xii. 11.

9. At the moment of Christ's ascension how were the disciples engaged? How intense must have been their attention! If Jesus had suddenly vanished, that would have been miraculous, but a *visible* ascension was desirable;—why? In what way was he at last hidden from their sight? That would remind them of a majestic sight witnessed in the days of Moses. How did God then manifest his glory? Ex. xvi. 10.

10. The disciples, doubtless, wished to follow Christ;—how did they show this? After such an event, and such mental excitement, the shock to their feelings would have been dreadful if they had been left to themselves;—who, therefore, were sent to them? What was their appearance? They are supposed to have been the same angels who appeared at the sepulcher in “shining garments,” and with countenances like lightning. Do you remember what effect their appearance had on the Roman guard?

11. What question did these angels ask? The question was not designed to censure the disciples, but powerfully to call their attention back to their *work* on earth. What promise did the angels make respecting Christ's return? The phrase, “in like manner,” refers chiefly to the truth, that Christ's person will be made visible. Who shall then

see him? Rev. i. 7. For what purpose will he come? 2 Tim. iv. 1. In reference to that event, what is our chief duty? Amos iv. 12. Is there any duty to which we ought to attend before that one?

12. How far was Bethany, the place of ascension, from Jerusalem? This phrase denotes nearly a mile—a distance about twenty rods short of a mile. This designation did not arise from divine command, but from the “traditions of the elders.” The people generally understood it and observed it. The Jewish scribes taught that these traditions, of which this was one, were binding on the conscience;—how did our Saviour speak of them? Matt. xv. 3.

13. As soon as the apostles reached the city, where did they assemble? The place where the Lord’s Supper was instituted is described in a similar way;—in what terms? Luke xxii. 12. By whom at this time was this place constantly occupied?

14. What was their chief employment? From what has been said, we learn what they were seeking;—what was it? What is said of the spirit of prayer which they cherished? In this meeting there were others besides the apostles;—who were they? These had stood by the cross of Jesus;—what notice does John take of them in his gospel? John xix. 25. In this prayer-meeting at Jerusalem only one woman is mentioned by name;—who is that? This is the last time her name is mentioned in the New Testament. The time or manner of her death is not recorded. Do you know what class of persons worship her? Is there any intimation in the Bible that she is worthy to receive worship? What did our Lord teach respecting the proper object of worship? Matt. iv. 10. What was taught by an angel direct from heaven on this subject? Rev. xxii. 8, 9.

Is Christ worshiped in heaven? Rev. v. 12. From all this we may see by what kind of worship on earth we may best prepare for heaven;—in what does such worship consist?

CHAPTER I.

LESSON II.—15-26.

The Address of Peter respecting Judas—The Disciples' Prayer—The Choice of another Apostle.

15. IN this meeting of the first Christian church how many were together? Does this number comprise the whole body of Christians at that time, or were there many others scattered abroad? See 1 Cor. xv. 6.

16. The subject of Peter's address on this occasion was the fall of Judas, and the necessity of supplying his place in the apostleship. Does Peter address himself to the apostles only, or to the whole church? Being about to quote a passage of Scripture from the Old Testament, he speaks of the author of it;—who was that? By whom was it spoken? What does this verse prove respecting the *inspiration* of the Old Testament? Much of the Psalm referred to here seems to have described originally the case of David himself; but then David was a representative of Christ;—is Christ, in prophecy, ever called by the name of David? Isa. lv. 3, 4.

18, 19. These two verses do not belong to the address of Peter, but form a parenthesis, thrown in by Luke to explain Peter's allusion to Judas. In the "former treatise," or Gospel of Luke, no account had been given to Theophilus of the terrible end of Judas, and therefore it was necessary to mention the fact in this place. The thirty

pieces of silver which Judas received are here alluded to;—what are they called? Judas did not *intend* that his money should be given to buy a burial-place for the poor;—how was this brought about? Matt. xxvii. 4–8. We learn from Matthew that Judas hanged himself;—what *additional* information does Luke give us? Was this fact known to few or many? How was it commemorated?

20. The quotations of Peter are taken from two Psalms of David: lxix. 25, and cix. 8;—what was the first quotation? What was the second? How do they apply to the case of Judas? See the fruits of sin! Instead of Judas' money being used to buy land for himself, for whom did it buy land?

21. From what class of men did Peter say that a new apostle should be chosen?

22. This verse speaks of the first and last days of Christ's ministry. From what era does Peter reckon the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry? From what era does he reckon its close? He speaks of one essential qualification for an apostle;—what was that? It is thought by some that the rank or office of apostleship has been transmitted to this day;—what does this verse prove in regard to that question? In the days of Paul there were some who disputed his claim to the rank of an apostle;—how did Paul prove that he possessed it? 1 Cor. ix. 1. If such be a necessary qualification for an apostle, is it proper for any bishop in our days to claim the rank of an apostle?

23. Two candidates for the office of an apostle were now appointed;—who were they?

24. How did they ask counsel of God? What did they say of God's knowledge?

25. The office to be filled was that of "ministry and apostleship;" all apostles were ministers;—but were all

ministers apostles? How did Judas fall from his apostleship? To what place did he go? Some have professed to believe that, after all, Judas went to heaven;—what did our Lord intimate on that point? Matt. xxvi. 24, and John xvii. 12.

26. By what means did they ascertain the will of God in this case? Was this an ancient mode of appealing to God? Josh. vii. 14, 15; 1 Sam. x. 20, 21; 1 Chron. xxiv. 5-7. What is said by Solomon on this point? Prov. xvi. 33. A common way of electing by lot was to cast tickets with the proper names written on them into an urn, and then drawing them out. As Christ had promised to his apostles special guidance, there is, therefore, reason to believe that they acted in this matter under divine direction. Paul recognized twelve apostles besides himself. 1 Cor. xv. 5. On whom did the choice fall? In regard to the decision of questions by lot we are not authorized to imitate the apostles in this extraordinary case;—but in what respect may we imitate their example in seeking the guidance of God?

CHAPTER II.

LESSON I.—1-21.

The Miraculous Coming of the Holy Spirit—Its Effect on the Disciples—On the Spectators—The Discourse of Peter.

1. THE first thing mentioned in this chapter is the day of Pentecost. This name is of Greek origin, meaning fiftieth. The feast of harvest bore this name because it began on the fiftieth day after the Passover Sabbath. Was this mode of calculation a matter of divine command?

Lev. xxiii. 16. We learn from the preceding chapter that after the ascension of Christ the disciples went immediately to the prayer-room. From the Passover Sabbath to the ascension was a period of *forty* days;—how long a time intervened before the day of Pentecost? Do you see from this narrative in what manner this interval of time was chiefly spent by the disciples? What leading feature distinguished this meeting of the early church? Why did they remain together in this way instead of going immediately to their work of preaching the gospel? Acts i. 4.

2. They were roused by a startling sign of the Spirit's presence;—what did it resemble? Had Christ himself ever spoken of such a symbol as this to denote the power of the Spirit? John iii. 8.

3. Another sign appeared;—what was it? The Hebrews were familiar with the idea that fire is a symbol of the divine energy. Any form of fire would denote that;—but what idea would a *tongue* of fire suggest?

4. If there were any doubt as to what the fiery tongues signified, the event that followed made it clear to all;—how? We read in Gen. (xi. 1-9) of the *confusion* of tongues; here we read of the *gift* of tongues;—what was the *design* of each of these visitations?

5. As soon as the gift of tongues was granted to the disciples they had occasion to use it. They soon had an audience gathered from all lands;—of whom was it composed? Where were they residing at this period? At the present day Jewish families are living in all parts of the world, but they are not *now* accustomed to visit Jerusalem as they did in the age of the apostles;—why not? It is easy to answer this question when you consider the present state of Jerusalem;—by whom was this predicted? Luke xxi. 20, 21

6. To hear unlearned men speaking in various languages was a strange event. The news flew abroad;—what was the effect?

7. How did the multitude express their wonder?

8. The miracle was proved to be real and not imaginary. In what respect were these people competent judges?

9-11. The historian mentions the names of the various countries from which the multitude had come. [It would be well to observe their positions by means of a map.] On what subjects did the disciples speak in these languages?

12. The multitude all acknowledged the fact, but did not know how to explain it;—what question did they ask?

13. Some, however, who were not wiser than the rest, pretended to explain it;—what did they say? Perhaps these were residents of Jerusalem, who did not understand the foreign languages that were spoken, and would not take the trouble to ascertain the truth. Why are persons of this class so positive in expressing hasty opinions? Prov. xxvi. 16.

14. When the attention of the people was thoroughly awakened, who stood up to answer their questions? To whom does he particularly address himself? We have already suggested the reason why he should address himself to these at first;—what was it? What a contrast between the appearance of the speaker on this occasion and on another which had arisen seven weeks before;—in what respects? Luke xxii. 55-60.

15. In denying the charge of intoxication what argument did the apostle use? “The third hour,” or nine o’clock, was the time of morning prayer. It was the custom of religious Jews to abstain from eating or drinking until after that hour. Would this fact strengthen or weaken the apostle’s denial of their charge?

16. He accounted for the wonder by appealing to prophecy;—what prophet did he quote? He lived and prophesied about 690 years before the coming of Christ. The prophecy quoted by Peter is found in Joel ii. 28–32.

17. To what period of *time* does the prophecy refer? In order to understand this phrase it may be well to observe that in the early ages of the world, when patriarchs and prophets looked forward to the days of Christ, they used to call them “the last days.” They well understood that no dispensation of religion is to follow the *Christian*; therefore they called these “the last days.” How does Paul explain the use of this phrase? Heb. i. 1. Peter does not attribute the origin of the prophecy to Joel;—to whom does he attribute it? Peter says, in another place, that the old prophets themselves did not fully understand the nature of those glorious things which they spake of;—what did he teach on this point? 1 Pet. i. 11. In old times the prophetic gifts of the Spirit were granted only to a few among the Jews; it was the will of God, however, “in the last days,” to extend them to people of all nations;—how was this expressed? In old times God made known his will supernaturally, “by dreams and visions,” to a few chosen prophets; it was foretold, however, that these should become more common;—how was this expressed?

18. The prophecy of Joel was that the gifts of the Spirit should be granted to young and old, to sons and daughters, “to *the* servants and *the* handmaidens,” that is to persons of every class. In quoting the prophecy, Peter shows that God would acknowledge these as *his own* people. To express this, how does he vary the phrase?

19. Peter proceeds to quote the prophecy, which now sets forth in highly poetic language those same great calamities which our Lord warned his disciples of in the

twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. The passage refers to those awful scenes connected with the downfall of the whole Hebrew commonwealth. This event would naturally excite in the soul of a Jew the same *emotions* as would be produced by great convulsions of nature, and it is described, therefore, in similar language. For an illustration of this, see Amos viii. 9, 10. In the verse before us what images are grouped together to denote great calamities?

20. What images are grouped in this verse? In order to understand these allusions, it will be well to study the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, containing our Lord's warnings of the destruction of Jerusalem. [See Vol. I on the Gospel of Matthew.] The time of that event was a day of wrath and judgment. Christ himself said that it should be notable and extraordinary;—how did he express this? Matt. xxiv. 21.

21. Amid these calamities who would be saved? The followers of Christ were saved from the destruction of Jerusalem by obeying their Lord's directions. On the appearance of certain signs what did he bid them do? Matt. xxiv. 16. Does this direction of Peter refer *only* to temporal salvation? Rom. x. 11. Is there any other way of salvation? Acts iv. 12. The dying thief embraced this way of salvation;—how? Luke xxiii. 42. What was the effect in his case? The penitent publican also embraced it;—how? Luke xviii. 13. From these cases you may see that the way of salvation is adapted to man universally, and to all circumstances. It can be embraced by one who is in a temple, or on a gibbet; on a bed of sickness, or on the wreck of a ship, or in such a situation as you are at the present moment. What, therefore, is your immediate duty if you are not a Christian? Heb. iii. 7, 8. Wherein

consists the *danger* of delay? Wherein consists the *sin* of delay? Wherein consists the *folly* of delay? Where lies your own *temptation* to delay?

CHAPTER II.

LESSON II.—22-47.

Proof that Jesus of Nazareth was the foretold Messiah—Effect of the Discourse—Baptism of Three Thousand Converts—State of the Church in Jerusalem.

22. DOES Peter address his audience as Jews or Gentiles? By what name does he call them? Where did that name originate? Gen. xxxii. 28. How does he call for their attention? Our Lord was born at Bethlehem;—why was he called Jesus of Nazareth? Luke iv. 16 What kind of proofs were used to establish Christ's mission? Can you mention some of them? These were produced in public, and were therefore well known;—how does Peter express this?

23. Many of the Jews expected that their promised Messiah would prove his mission by splendid conquests, and rejected the thought that he would or could be crucified. Peter anticipates their objection on this ground by alluding to the *plan* of God respecting Christ's death;—how does he do this? It could be proved from *prophecy* that the death of Christ was a part of God's plan;—where was it foretold? Isa. liii. Many would be ready to say that if God's plan were fulfilled by the crucifixion of Christ, those who were engaged in the deed were guiltless. But the plans of God never interfere with the free agency of man;—how does the apostle express this? On this point

it may be well to observe that God often fulfills *his* counsel by letting sinners have *their own* way. He *rules* in the hearts of saints, and he *overrules* the acts of sinners. The case of Joseph, sold as a slave in Egypt, illustrates this ;—how? Gen. i. 20.

24. Peter now brings to view the *main proof* that Jesus was the true Messiah ;—what fact was that? The *painful consequences* of death, such as the corruption of the body, and separation from those we love, did not follow in the case of Christ ;—why? When Christ was put to death, his enemies thought it not possible for him to fulfill his own predictions ;—why were they mistaken? John x. 18.

25. The apostle having spoken of the Messiah's resurrection as a *fact*, now proceeds to show that it ought not to be thought incredible, because it had been of old the subject of prophecy. Peter's audience all believed that the ancient prophets had spoken of the Messiah ;—in this case what prophet did the apostle quote? The quotation is from Ps. xvi. 8–11. The prophet declares that he was *ever mindful* of the Messiah, that he always felt as if in his presence ;—how does he express this? How does the Psalmist express his confidence of safety?

26. The prophet here speaks in the name of the Messiah, and uses words appropriate to Christ himself ;—how does he express his joy at the thought of a resurrection from the dead? Paul says that Christ “endured the cross for the joy that was set before him.” Heb. xii. 2. Did Christ before his own death anticipate his resurrection? Matt. xvi. 21.

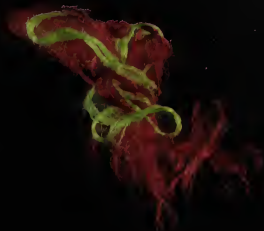
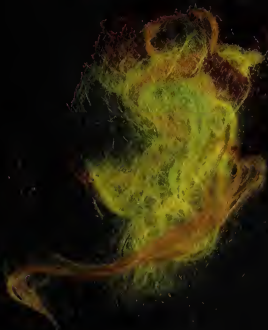
27. The word translated “hell” in this verse is Hades, and this might have been *transferred*, instead of being translated, for in that way the meaning would have been plainer. Hades is the name given to the invisible world,

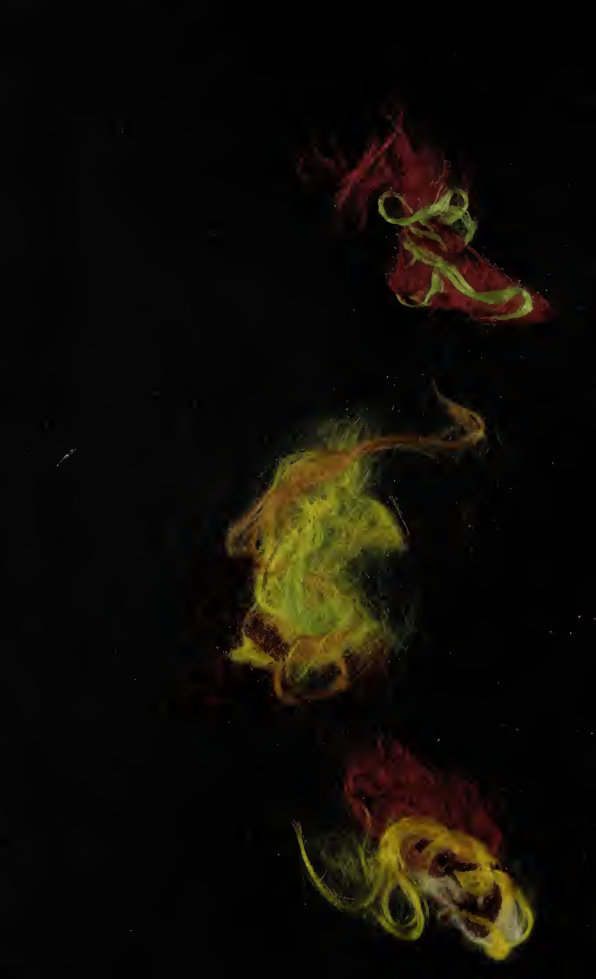
“the separate state of the dead.” It is a state both of reward and punishment. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, our Saviour speaks of the wealthy sinner and the faithful Abraham as being both in Hades, but far apart from each other; the one in misery, the other in happiness. The word “Hades,” therefore, does not, like the word “hell,” denote merely a place of misery. There is another word translated “hell,” that is “gehenna,” used by our Saviour in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 29, etc.), which denotes a state of misery simply. But this is not the case with “Hades,” and the phrase, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in ‘Hades,’” means, Thou wilt not leave me in the state of the dead. After the death of the Messiah how long was he in the state of the dead? Why was he called the Holy One? Where was his body laid? The prophecy declared that it should remain in the grave but a *short time*;—how was this expressed?

28. These words celebrate the joy of the crucified Messiah in view of the resurrection;—to whom are they addressed? From whom did the promise of exaltation come? Ps. ii. 7, and cx. 1.

29. Having finished the quotation from prophecy, of whom does Peter proceed to speak? Lest some might object to the application of the prophecy, and say that David spake of himself, the apostle shows that it could not apply to him. In what state was David at the time of Peter’s discourse?

30. Peter speaks of the *inspiration* of David;—what does he call him? On what subject had David received a revelation? In one of his psalms David celebrated this promise;—what did he say? Ps. lxxxix. 35–37. This promise was of old the hope of Israel;—what did Paul say of it? Rom. i. 2–4.





31. To what *fact* in Christ's history did David's prophecy refer? In regard to the resurrection the prophecy affirms two things—one of the soul, the other of the body of the Messiah;—what does it say of each?

32. Peter now shows that the *predictions* of the prophets and the *testimony* of apostles perfectly agree;—in what respect? What means of knowledge had the witnesses in this case? See chap. i. 3, note.

33. Christ's resurrection was preparatory to another event;—what was that? With the ancients the right hand was the emblem of *power*, and to sit at the right hand was an emblem of *dignity*. This was in contrast with the humiliation of Christ on the cross. Peter had already shown that prophecy pointed out the descent of the Spirit as a signal proof of the reign of Christ, now he shows that the prophecy and the fact agree;—in what respect?

34. He brings another argument to show that the prophecy could not refer to David;—what was it? He quotes the 110th Psalm;—what prophecy did that contain? If David in spirit called Jesus Lord, how is he then David's son?

35. The final triumph of Christ's kingdom is predicted;—in what terms? The world is divided into two classes—Christ's "foes" and friends;—how shall we know in which class to rank ourselves?

36. Who are meant by "all the house of Israel?" Of what were they guilty? To what conclusion did this discourse bring them?

37. However loth they might be to admit this conclusion, the evidence of it was clear. The truth was like a sharp sword piercing the heart;—in what respect? How did they show that they were convinced by the truth? Did this imply confession of sin?

38. What duties did Peter enjoin on them? Conviction is one thing, repentance another;—how do they differ? Judas was convicted;—did he truly repent? If a man truly repent of sin he will love Christ;—how should he show this? John xiv. 15. What did Christ promise as the effect of this? John xiv. 16, 17. What did Peter say would be the effect of this?

39. The Jews had cried out when they crucified Christ, “His blood be on us, and our children!” thence they might infer that their own curse would rest on them;—how did Peter encourage them to hope for its removal? Does this promise of grace extend to us? At the time it was given heathenism covered the finest portions of the earth, and but for Christ’s fulfillment of this promise heathenism would now prevail even here. Heathens and Jews were distinguished as those that were “far off,” and those that were “nigh.” Eph. ii. 17. Those who know the true religion are, in point of privilege, nigh to God;—what is their duty to the heathen? Matt. xxviii. 19. Where the gospel is truly preached all are called, but what follows if the call be rejected? Heb. ii. 3.

40. Has Luke told us all that Peter said at this time, or only the substance? When called to yield to the claims of Christ, we are in danger of waiting to see how others will determine, and whether the great multitude will not be on the same side;—what caution did the apostle give on this point?

41. Here is a beautiful expression to denote the act of faith;—what is it? How did these converts profess their faith? What command had Christ given in regard to such a public profession? Matt. xxviii. 19. How many were on that day added to the church? Whether they were all baptized on the same day has been questioned. The nar-

rative is not perfectly clear on that point. Nevertheless this large number could easily have been baptized on the day of Pentecost, for among the one hundred and twenty disciples present there were, we have every reason to believe, those seventy preachers whom Jesus had ordained and sent forth. Luke x. 1. Moreover, it may be well to mention here, as a fact of some importance, that in the early centuries the Greek churches were accustomed to baptize only once or twice a year, that is, on Easter Day and Pentecost, and that in the year 404, Chrysostom of Constantinople, with the aid of his presbyters in that city, immersed three thousand persons. This fact shows two things: first, that such a baptism is altogether practicable; secondly, that the ancient Christians understood that immersion is the act denoted by the word baptism.

42. It might be feared that persons so suddenly converted would apostatize;—what is said on that point? Four things are mentioned to denote their perseverance;—what are these? The first shows that they aimed to become *intelligent* Christians;—why? The second shows that they were *united* Christians;—why? The third shows that their *social* feelings had taken a new turn;—why? The fourth shows that they were *devotional* Christians;—why?

43. Now there was a great change in the state of public feeling;—in what respect? Afterward what increased this new state of feeling? The apostles were endowed with great powers;—what promise was thus fulfilled? Mark xvi. 17.

44. At the feast of Pentecost thousands of Jews were assembled from different countries in Jerusalem, and it was customary for those who were from the same country to be together. [This fact is alluded to in chap. vi. 9.]

But these converts were now united by a stronger bond than that of country or of kin;—what bond was that? They left their old synagogues;—with whom did they choose to associate? A great emergency arose. They were exposed to persecution from their countrymen who were not converted, and many would be “cast out of the synagogue,” and be liable to the ills of poverty;—how was this emergency met?

45. How did the rich obtain money to divide among the poor? If a similar emergency should now arise, true Christians would meet it in a similar manner. But in ordinary cases what is the rule for a Christian church—to live on a common stock, or for each to take care of his own? 1 Tim. v. 8. Yet toward the poor what is our duty? Gal. ii. 10.

46. The daily habits of the new converts proved devotion;—how? They proved that true religion cultivates social feeling;—how? They proved that true religion produces happiness;—how was this manifest?

47. How did they show their gratitude? The *rulers* were not converted, yet the storm of persecution was lulled;—in what way? After the day of Pentecost the cause of religion made constant progress. Did the converts keep their religion a secret? How did they profess it? Are all Christians bound to imitate their example? Matt. x. 32, 33.

CHAPTER III.

LESSON.—1-26.

A great Miracle—It is ascribed to the Power of Christ—The People charged with the Guilt of his Crucifixion—Peter's Second Discourse.

1. At the forty-sixth verse of the last chapter what is said of the daily habits of the first Christians while residing in Jerusalem? Accordingly, who are mentioned here as observing this practice? There were regular times for public prayer;—at what hour was this? The Jews made twelve hours in each day, from sunrise to sunset. The ninth hour was the middle one between noon and sunset. At the time of the equinox this was three o'clock in the afternoon. This was the time of "evening prayer." There was also the morning and noon prayer hour. This division was probably quite ancient. Ps. lv. 17.

2. A beggar, lame from his birth, arrested their attention;—why was he there? How did he get there? There was one great gate of the temple, covered, as Josephus says, with Corinthian brass, exceedingly splendid;—what was its name? In Eastern lands it is common now for the miserably poor to ask alms at temple doors;—can you think of a reason why such places should be selected?

3. This poor man addressed the two apostles;—for what?

4. They did not turn their eyes away with indifference or disgust, but fixed his attention on themselves;—how?

5. What did the poor man then expect?

6. The apostles had no money, but conferred that which was much better;—what was it? In whose name was

this gift conferred? In whose name did Christ himself work miracles?

7. A great change immediately followed the words of Peter;—what was it?

8. Not only was the miracle wrought, but none could dispute it;—what were the proofs of its reality? What was the effect on the poor man's heart? Once Christ healed ten lepers;—how many of them acted like this man? Luke xvii. 18. Ingratitude is a great sin. We all owe much to Christ;—for what, especially, does he deserve our gratitude? When this poor man received the command to walk, he did not *wait* to see if any change had been wrought in his limbs, but with the *will* to obey strength came;—what great lesson does this teach us?

9. Who were witnesses to this miracle? Observe, the miracles of Christ and the apostles were *public*. They were performed before *enemies* as well as friends. They were wrought to establish a new doctrine in spite of the public prejudice, and did establish it;—can these things be said of false or spurious miracles?

10. The multitude were *competent* witnesses in this case;—why? What were the effects of the work on their minds?

11. A great crowd collected;—where? Jesus once preached a discourse on that spot;—what was the effect? John x. 31.

12. When Peter spoke he answered their *thoughts*;—what questions did he ask them?

13. In beginning his address he intimates that he was not about to preach a new religion;—how does he do this? He shows that they had rejected the God whom they professed to serve;—how does he do it? He shows that they were greater sinners than the heathen governor by whom

Jesus had been scourged;—in what way? This was faithful preaching;—in what respect is it an example for preachers in our time?

14. What character does the apostle ascribe to Jesus? How had they proved the enmity of their hearts against him? Whom had they preferred to him? They had obeyed their priests and rulers rather than their own consciences;—in what way? Mark xv. 11.

15. Peter shows to the Jews the enormity of their sin in view of the *character* of Christ;—what title does he give the Saviour? He asserts the same great fact that he had dwelt upon in the preceding discourse;—what was that? Why is this fact regarded as so important? 1 Cor. xv. 14.

16. In this verse the apostle points out the true cause of the miracle. He had disclaimed all power to work it himself, and now brings to view the fact that he had invoked the name of another;—how does he do this? In performing the miracle what *words* had the apostle used? The words had no *power* in themselves, but they made known whence the efficient power came;—from whom? What promise had been given to the apostles in regard to this exercise of power? Mark xvi. 17, 18. Nevertheless, a promise is of no avail to us unless it be believed, that is, received with faith. Unless it is trusted it will not be a motive to action;—what, therefore, did Peter say respecting the exercise of faith?

17. In a course of sin the mind becomes *blinded* by passion, so that, at last, in hours of reflection it is astonished to see to what lengths it has gone. Such was the case with Peter's audience;—what did he say to them on this point? Observe here, that ignorance of one's duty is itself a sin, when the means of knowledge are neglected

or abused;—what did Christ himself say of his hearers in regard to this? Matt. xiii. 15. Nevertheless, sins of ignorance do not fatally harden the heart like willful sins committed with the eyes open;—what did Paul teach on this subject? Heb. x. 26.

18. Peter did not wish the people to think that his Lord would not forgive them, therefore he taught them that God had *overruled* the evil they had done for good;—how did he do this? The apostle shows in this expression that the prophecies of the Old Testament are to be viewed and studied as ONE grand system;—how does he bring out this idea?

19. God's foreseeing and foretelling the sins of men can not take away their freedom or their sinfulness; hence what two duties does the apostle enjoin on his hearers? The first duty relates to the heart, the other to the life, yet they always go together;—why so? The same happy consequence is mentioned as following repentance that was spoken of in the preceding discourse, chap. ii. 38;—what blessing is that? As a motive to repentance Peter brings out the idea that happy times were in reserve for true Christians, in which he wished his hearers to participate. He calls these "times of refreshing." He refers to the progress of Christ's kingdom on the earth, and its consummation in heaven. To these he habitually looked forward with joyful hope. In order to understand his views more fully see his second epistle (2 Pet. iii. 8–14).

20. In order to exhibit the blessing of being forgiven, the mind of Peter glances onward to the ultimate issue—the final coming of Christ. Because, although forgiveness is a blessing to the believer *now*, yet for a man to be "in his sins" and unforgiven *then*, will be the same as to be

lost. Christ himself had taught the same truth;—in what manner? Matt. xxv. 31–33.

21. The apostle here meets an objection that would naturally arise in some minds. It was a common belief of the Jews before the Messiah came, that he would abide on the earth. See John xii. 36. Peter, therefore, asserts that for the present Christ must remain in *heaven*, not on *earth*;—how does he express this? The word which is here translated “receive” means *retain*;—what period is spoken of as that of Christ’s final coming? From Christ’s own teachings we judge that “the restitution of all things” means the restoring of all things to their proper place, that is, bringing order out of disorder. He teaches us that *now* the good and bad are mingled, the wise and foolish virgins are together, the wheat and tares are together, the sheep and goats are together;—but at his final coming what change will take place? Matt. xiii. 40–43, and xxv. 31. It said in this verse that the oldest as well as the later prophets have foretold this ultimate issue. Jude refers us to one of the oldest prophets speaking on this subject;—what did he say? Jude 14, 15.

22. What prediction does Peter quote from Moses? Where is it found? Deut. xviii. 18, 19. Moses was particularly distinguished by uniting in himself the offices of prophet and lawgiver. In this, especially, Christ was like him. What duty was enjoined in regard to this great prophet whom Moses spoke of?

23. What will be the effect of rejecting this prophet? On this subject how did Paul reason in his epistle to the Hebrews? Heb. x. 28, 29.

24. Peter again draws the attention of his hearers to the chief subject of ancient prophecy;—how does he do it?

25. The apostle now reminds his hearers of their great

privileges;—in what respects? Their advantages were great;—what was the chief of all? Rom. iii. 2. When the world was sunken in idolatry God called Abraham from Chaldea, directed his steps to Canaan, gave him the promise that he should be the father of a nation, and that from him the Messiah should come forth to be a blessing to all nations. This arrangement is called “a covenant;” —in what terms was it expressed? Gen. xii. 1-3. The Jews were the children of Abraham by the law of *natural* descent, but they thought more of this relation than they ought to have done;—why? Matt. iii. 8, 9. There was another way in which they might be reckoned as the children of Abraham, and which they too much despised; —what way was that? Rom. iv. 13.

26. Peter wished that his hearers might become children of Abraham and heirs of the covenant in this higher and better sense;—how did he show them the way in which this might be accomplished? Was the opportunity offered to all or a few? The same offers of grace are made to us; —will they do us any good unless we accept them? If we reject them will our condition be rendered worse on that account? Matt. xi. 21, 22. In view of this great subject what is the first and most important duty of every one who reads or hears the gospel? 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

CHAPTER IV.

LESSON I.—1-20.

The Apostles' Teaching interrupted—They are carried before the Rulers—Peter's Address to them—Perplexity of the Rulers—Their Threat—The Apostles' Answer.

1. THE miracle of healing the lame man at the gate

of the temple had drawn a crowd together. While the apostles were preaching to these, who interrupted them? Observe here, that there was a body of persons called the "Temple Guard." Their business was to protect the property of the temple, and to preserve order;—what is their leader called in this verse? The Sadducees are here mentioned;—what was their leading doctrine? Matt. xxii. 23.

2. We often have occasion to notice that the open opposition to Christ sprang not from the people at large, but from the *government*;—how was it in this case? Why were the Sadducees particularly offended?

3. Jewish courts were held in the morning;—at what time did this interruption of the apostles take place? What was done with them?

4. Nevertheless Peter's sermon was not lost;—why? What number of men had been converted up to this time?

5. This verse mentions the classes of persons who composed the Sanhedrim, or high court of the Jews;—who were they?

6. The highest officers were present;—who are here mentioned? Of these, who presided at the trial of Jesus? John xi. 49. Would the apostles expect impartial judgment at this tribunal?

7. It was a common belief at that time that many things of a miraculous kind could be done by magic. Very often the jugglers, sorcerers, or magicians, would invoke the name of an angel, or of Abraham, or of Solomon. The wonderful healing of the lame man could not be denied; and now the high priests wish to put the apostles on a level with their own sorcerers. They did not say this openly, but *intimated* it by a question;—in what way?

8. Who spoke in behalf of the apostles? Who prompted

him to speak? His manner of address was respectful;—how did this appear?

9. He would not allow what had been done to be treated as a *crime*;—what did he call it?

10. He did not wish any thing concealed;—whom did he wish to know it? To whom did he attribute the glory of the miracle? In referring to Jesus, he did not speak of him as belonging to Bethlehem or Jerusalem;—what place did he mention? With what feelings did the Jews regard that place? John i. 46. What *crime* did Peter charge upon the rulers? Two facts were mentioned to prove the claims of Jesus as the Messiah;—what was the first? What was the second? The first fact Paul quoted for the same purpose?—what did he say? Rom. i. 4. Facts like the second had been predicted by Isaiah long before, as proofs of the Messiah;—in what way? Isa. xxxv. 6.

11. In Psalm cxviii. 22, is a remarkable saying, with which the rulers were quite familiar. Peter quoted it, and applied it to them;—what was it? This very passage our Lord had applied in a similar way;—on what occasion? Matt. xxi. 42. The church of God is often compared to a building; the Jewish priests and rabbis thought that they were the appointed builders. In this verse, however, Peter shows that they were not, for they were not qualified to select the material adapted to the structure. Seven centuries before this time Isaiah had prophesied of Christ as the true foundation-stone of the spiritual temple;—what had he said? Isa. xxviii. 16. Many years after this discourse, Peter spoke of this subject in one of his letters;—what did he say? 1 Pet. ii. 6.

12. Peter not only shows that Christ is the true foundation, but he shows the *necessity* of every one's building

the fabric of his hopes on this foundation;—how does he do this? There are those who have said that the Christian religion is good for some, but that another religion may be better for others;—did the teaching of Peter agree with this view, or differ from it? After Christianity became known abroad, some of the learned Romans wished to rank Jesus among the pagan gods, and pay him divine honors;—would the apostles have been pleased with that? We see from the preaching of the apostles that Christianity is a *liberal* system of religion, because it offers a free salvation to all, even the greatest sinners; but this verse proves it to be also an exclusive religion;—in what respect?

13. One thing astonished the Jewish court;—what was that? The word translated *ignorant* in this verse means *private* men, that is, they did not belong to any of the learned professions—they were not scribes or lawyers. What conclusion did the court come to about them? What promise of Christ was now fulfilled? Luke xxi. 15.

14. The court wished to condemn the apostles as false teachers or impostors;—what prevented them? The poor man who had been a cripple and had been healed appears to have felt gratitude toward the apostles;—how did he show this?

15. The court being in a dilemma, what did they do at first to the apostles? What followed among themselves?

16. What question was discussed? What confession did they make? Why do you suppose that this court did not condemn the apostles to death, as it had their master?

17. The court resolved to *conceal* what they knew from the people;—how? This proved that their cause was a weak one;—why?

18. How did the court carry its resolution into effect?

19. The Jewish Court, like the Spanish Inquisition, was accustomed to see its prisoners terrified by its threats. But the apostles were not intimidated;—what appeal did they make? They declared the great *principle* on which they acted;—what was it?

20. This principle always fills the soul with courage;—what effect did the apostles say it had on them? The prophet Jeremiah once felt the same effect of the same principle;—how did he express it? Jer. xx. 9. If we have love to Christ it will act on us in the same way—it will make us bold and fearless. What was Paul's experience on this point? 2 Cor. v. 14. If we feel convinced that we are indebted to Christ for eternal salvation, we should show our *gratitude* by obedience and by zeal in his service.

CHAPTER IV.

LESSON II.—21–37.

The Apostles Dismissed—Their Prayer—The Answer to their Prayer
—Their Love and Disinterestedness

21. THE apostles' appeal was not answered by *argument*;—by what then? The court would have been glad to have punished them;—why did they not do it? The people saw God's hand in the miracle;—what was the effect on them?

22. One thing made the people sure that the miracle was genuine;—what was that?

23. When the apostles were dismissed, to whom did they go? What was the subject of their conversation? How often did this company meet? Acts ii. 46.

24. This was a joyful meeting, and united in joyful worship. To whom did the disciples address themselves? Did they begin their worship with praise or prayer? In addressing God it has a good effect on our minds to mention his names and perfections;—what perfection of God did they here celebrate?

25. It has also a good effect upon the mind to dwell upon the truths of his word. What psalm did they quote? Does this verse show that the psalm was divinely inspired?

26. The psalm was prophetic. It foretold that the governments of the earth would oppose Christ. How is this expressed? In the psalm itself, which was composed in Hebrew, the word here rendered Christ is *Messiah*. The Hebrew word *Messiah* and the Greek word *Christ* have the same sense, meaning, “the anointed one.” This designation of our Saviour arose from the fact that prophets, priests, and kings were inaugurated into office by being anointed with sacred oil. We have already seen (chap. iii. 22) that Jesus was foretold as the great prophet of Israel. Was he also foretold as a priest and king? Ps. cx. 4.

27. In their act of worship the disciples say that the prophecy respecting Jesus had been fulfilled;—how did they express this?

28. The heathen were wont to say that the ignominious death of Jesus proved that he was not the Son of God, or that, if he were, the God of the Christians had not power or wisdom to protect him. The disciples, however, rejoiced to think that the wrath of man would be made to subserve the designs of God;—how does this appear? The enemies of God are *free agents*, and act from choice, but there is a limit to their power;—why? Dan. iv. 35.

29. The voice of praise is followed by that of prayer;—what was the first request of the disciples? Thus they

spread their complaint before the Lord, just as Hezekiah spread the blasphemous letter of the king of Assyria before the mercy seat. Isa. xxxvii. 14. Now observe, the disciples did not pray that they might be free from all trouble, and have an easy life;—what quality of character did they seek?

30. What *special favors* did they pray for? Remember that a special promise had been given them respecting these things, and now they pray that it may be fulfilled. What promise was that? Mark xvi. 17, 18. Remember, too, that they had already been assured of the fulfillment of this promise by the miraculous healing of the cripple at the gate of the temple. Why did they wish such favors to be repeated?

31. A new sign was immediately given to show that their prayer was heard. It was an external and miraculous sign;—what was it? The same blessing which followed their prayers on the day of Pentecost was repeated;—what was it? That was a great gift;—what *effect* did it produce on them? That gift was granted in answer to prayer;—what ancient promise was given to all earnest seekers on this point? Isa. xl. 31. Paul desired that his Christian brethren would pray that he might enjoy the same blessing;—how did he express it? Eph. vi. 18, 19.

32. There was now a multitude of disciples;—how many? See verse 4. There was no discord;—how were they united? One great test of character is the use which men make of worldly property;—how did these Christians use theirs? What lesson had Christ taught on this subject? Matt. xix. 29. Paul directed Timothy to enjoin the cultivation of the same spirit which these first Christians exhibited;—how did he express it? 1 Tim. vi. 18.

33. What was the great subject of the apostles' preaching

at this time? This one great FACT employed their thoughts;—if all men heartily believed this fact, what effect do you suppose would naturally follow? What is said of the character of the apostles' preaching? Every body saw that a remarkable degree of divine influence rested on these men;—how is this expressed?

34, 35. Among this multitude there were rich and poor;—did any of the poor suffer from want? The rich met the emergency by turning their lands into money;—how did they do this? Under whose direction was the distribution made? We see that there was no *joint stock* of property, like that advocated by the Communists, in which each one claims a share, but a free contribution as far as was necessary to relieve the wants of the distressed. Was this distribution ordained by any law of the church, or was it entirely voluntary?

36, 37. There was among these converts a rich foreigner, who had property in one of the islands of the Mediterranean Sea;—what was his name? One of his names expressed his character;—what was that? This man became a Christian preacher;—what did he do with the property which he had left at home? He afterward traveled much with Paul, and was the first missionary sent forth by a Christian church to the heathen. How do we know this fact? Acts xi. 22. He did not preach for the sake of money, but gave up money for the sake of preaching;—are any in this age bound to imitate his example? Some time ago the example of Barnabas was imitated in a remarkable manner by Adoniram Judson, a missionary to Burmah, who, when he received ten thousand dollars for services rendered to the British government, “laid it down at the feet” of the Missionary Board. From this voluntary act, what should we infer respecting his idea of the right use of money?

CHAPTER V.

LESSON I.—1-23.

The Wilful Lie of Ananias and Sapphira—Their Death—Miraculous Power of the Apostles—New Persecution—Deliverance.

1, 2. THE last chapter closes with an example of sincere benevolence. Here we have an example quite in contrast with that. Two persons wished to obtain the credit of benevolence without having it. What were their names? We know nothing of them except their sin and its punishment. What did this man do with his property? It is implied that he made a false representation of the case;—in what respect? What share had his wife in the transaction? They desired the praise of being liberal, and probably intended to draw alms from the church-treasury, as if they had become poor.

3. Peter immediately put a startling question to Ananias;—what was it? Who tempted Ananias to speak falsely? There is no sin in being tempted, but only in yielding to temptation. Evil *men* often tempt us, and so do evil spirits; but if we yield to them the guilt is our own. The children of God are led by God's Spirit;—what does Christ say of those who practice falsehood? John viii. 44. Ananias had professed to believe with the rest that the apostles were guided by the Holy Ghost;—what peculiar daring or presumption is therefore attributed to him?

4. Peter argues the case with him;—whose was the land while it remained unsold? Was Ananias required to sell it? After he had sold it was he required to give it away if he did not wish to do so? He professed to be free in

giving the whole to the cause of God;—what was the peculiar character of his sin? All falsehood is sin; but this sin was aggravated;—why?

5. What judgment immediately fell on Ananias? Observe the phrase used in Scripture to express *death*. It marks the distinction between body and spirit;—in what way? The phrase occurs in the Old Testament. Gen. xlix. 33. It was a common phrase among the Jews in the earliest times, and indicates the common belief that the soul existed in a state of separation from the body. What was the effect of this judgment on the people generally? This remarkable event, which occurred at the opening of the Christian dispensation, is like one which occurred at the opening of the Mosaic dispensation;—what event was that? Lev. x. 1, 2. This is not God's *ordinary* way of punishing sin;—can you think of any reason why it was especially necessary in these cases?

6. What was immediately done with the corpse of Ananias?

7. During this time the wife of Ananias was absent;—how long was it before she came in? Had she known the fate of her husband, fear might have prevented her giving such answers as she did to the questions addressed to her. Peter wished to see if she would repeat Ananias' falsehood.

8. By what question did Peter try her? How did she show that she was a partaker of her husband's sin?

9. What did Peter call the crime that she had conspired with her husband to commit? The word "tempt" means not only to entice to sin, but also to try, or "put to the test." In contriving their falsehood Ananias and Sapphira acted just as if they wished to put the Holy Spirit "to the test," to see whether he could detect their sin or not.

Whenever men sin presumptuously they seem to have a doubt whether God notices them or not. How did Peter announce Sapphira's doom?

10 What event followed? Notice, the same mode of expressing death mentioned above occurs again. It denotes that the spirit left the body. When infidels, who do not believe in a future state of being, wish to express the fact that a man has died, they usually say, "He is no more." Did our Saviour distinctly teach the existence of the spirit in a state separate from the body? Luke xvi. 22, 23, and xxiii. 43.

11. What was the *effect* produced by the fate of these two persons on the minds of the people? If nothing of this kind had taken place, the church at Jerusalem would have been peculiarly liable to receive many who were under the influence of mercenary motives;—how does this appear from the facts already stated?

12. The apostles were endowed with wonderful powers;—how was this shown? The church at Jerusalem had now become very large, and a private room would not contain them;—where did they meet as one body?

13. It might be supposed that the captain of the temple, the officers, priests, and rulers would have driven the church away from the porch of the temple;—what prevented them from doing so? From the early history of the church it appears that the chief opposition against the cause of Christ arose from the *government* rather than from the *people*;—how is that distinction noticed in this verse? Paul enjoins it as a duty on Christians to pray for the governments of the earth;—what should we ask for them? 1 Tim. ii. 2.

14. Although unbelievers stood in awe of the Christian church, and none dared to interfere with them, or join

them through selfish motives, did the church decline as to numbers? Some dread the effects of discipline which cuts off unworthy members from a church;—what was the effect in this case?

15. Facts are mentioned which show the great influence which the apostles had with the people;—what facts are these? Were they miraculous? What promise of Christ was fulfilled? Mark xvi. 18. There was no virtue in the shadow of Peter, but those who could not get near him thus testified their faith in the *power of God* exerted through him. In such cases as these, according to what rule was healing generally granted? Matt. ix. 29. If any had looked for healing from a superstitious trust in Peter, as being more than man, or without any belief in Christ, would they have been likely to obtain it?

16. There was a great popular excitement throughout the surrounding country;—on what account? Two classes of afflicted persons are here mentioned;—who were they? What degree of success accompanied the applications of these people for help?

17. There was a great excitement of another kind in Jerusalem;—among whom? What passion was excited?

18. This excitement led to an act of violence;—what was it?

19. Christ had promised to be with his disciples in times of distress;—how did he help them on this occasion?

20. The bolts fly back—the doors are opened;—what command was given to the apostles? The phrase used here to denote the gospel is very significant; it is like a phrase which Peter once used himself in speaking to the Saviour;—what was that? John vi. 68.

21. The Jews were early worshipers at the temple;—how did the apostles avail themselves of that custom?

There was another meeting, of a different sort, held at the same time;—of whom was it composed? For what purpose was it called together?

22, 23. They were waiting for the return of their officers, and soon received some surprising news;—what was it?

24. What effect did this news produce on the minds of the council? If they had had honest and unprejudiced minds they would not have remained in *doubt*, but would have *believed with the heart* unto salvation. When the evidence was so clear, what was the main cause of unbelief? See Matt. xiii. 15.

In reviewing this lesson, what proof do we find that “lying lips are an abomination to the Lord?”

What proof that the apostles were inspired and commissioned to be the guides and teachers of the church?

What proof that mere light and evidence is not all that is sufficient to convert the soul to God?

What arguments in favor of fervent prayer for the influence of the Holy Spirit?

CHAPTER V.

LESSON II.—25–42.

25. THE closing verse of the last lesson brought to our view the Jewish council assembled, and in a state of doubt. Soon, however, they received news which filled them with astonishment;—what was that?

26. The officers had expected to have brought the apostles before the council out of a lonely prison. But they find them in a public place, surrounded by a crowd. In what manner did the officers treat them? What reason is

assigned for this? This is another instance to show that the persecutions against Christianity did not arise so much from the *people* as from governments.

27. The apostles had a new audience to address;—before whom were they brought? Who questioned them?

28. They were charged with violating a command of the council;—what command was that? Where is it recorded? Acts iv. 18. The council bore testimony to the diligence of the apostles;—in what way? When the rulers put Jesus to death they took the responsibility and the guilt upon themselves;—what did they say? Matt. xxvii. 25. Now they wish to get rid of responsibility;—how do they show this?

29. The high priest had reminded Peter of the commands of the council; Peter reminds the high priest of a higher authority;—whose was that? When had Peter given an answer like this to the same council? Acts iv. 19.

30. The apostles would not allow the council to throw off the responsibility of their own acts;—how did they charge it upon them? That was plain preaching. There were plain proofs before the council that God had commissioned the apostles, and therefore Peter had a right to speak boldly.

31. They had *degraded* Jesus;—what had God done afterward? Two offices are here assigned to Christ;—what are they? Many are willing to receive Christ in the second office who are not willing to receive him in the first;—can we really do this? Two blessings are here called the gifts of Christ;—what are they? Many are willing to receive the second, but are regardless of the first;—can they in fact be separated? Observe the *severity* and *kindness* of true preaching. First, it convicts of *sin*, then it offers pardon. If these murderers of Christ

had repented and sought pardon, would *they* have been forgiven?

32. The apostles knew what they affirmed;—what did they call themselves? They appealed to proofs direct from heaven;—what were these?

33. The Jewish rulers ought at once to have acknowledged their guilt, and sought forgiveness;—what effect, however, had Peter's sermon on them? What did they purpose to do? The same sun which softens wax hardens clay. The same truth which subdues one hardens another. The same gospel which convinced the people enraged the rulers. What doctrine may we see illustrated by these facts? Eph. ii. 8.

34. While the council were inclined to violent measures, a man noted for his prudence rose up to speak;—what was his name? What was his profession? Who was one of his most noted pupils? Acts xxii. 3. How was he regarded by the people? He is believed by many (according to Dr. Lightfoot) to have been a son of the pious Simeon who took the infant Saviour in his arms and blessed him. See Luke ii. 25–34. If so, it shows how true is the old proverb that “grace does not run in the blood.” We never find this man of worldly prudence ranked among Christians. What direction did he give to the council?

35. What caution did he give?

36. He drew a lesson from history. He brought to mind a fact with which they were all familiar;—what was it?

37. A similar fact occurred in the days of “the taxing,” about twenty-one years before this meeting of the council. As a province, Judea had been annexed to Syria, and taxed by the Roman government. A Jewish party rose up to oppose paying the tax, saying, that “God's chosen people” ought not to pay taxes to a heathen government.

In Galilee they were led by one Judas, whom Josephus calls "a Gaulonite," from Gaulanitis, the district to which he belonged. This dispute about the lawfulness of paying taxes to Rome raged during Christ's ministry. Do you remember what question was once brought to him on that subject? Matt. xxii. 17-21. What success did Judas have at first? What became of him?

38. In view of these facts Gamaliel gives the council some advice, and adds an argument to sustain it. What was the advice? What was the argument?

39. Gamaliel must have been deeply impressed with the appearance and words of the apostles. He was afraid to persecute them;—why? Here we find the Jewish rabbi agreeing in sentiment with his pupil Paul;—on what point? Rom. viii. 31. Here we see where the strength of the church really lies. The sentiment of Gamaliel is very much like that which was once beautifully expressed by another opposer of God's church, whom a heathen king had hired to curse it;—what sentiment was that? Num. xxiii. 23.

40. The council did not do *all* that they had at first intended. They followed Gamaliel's advice in part;—how far? In order to save their own honor they thought it necessary to disgrace the apostles;—how did they do this? What was the usual punishment in such cases? 2 Cor. xi. 24. They repeated a command which the apostles had already said they could not possibly obey;—what was that?

41. Did the apostles feel themselves disgraced? What emotion did their punishment excite in their minds? This was not merely a momentary feeling. More than thirty years afterward one of them wrote a letter to his brethren in which he expressed the same feeling;—what did he say?

1 Pet. iv. 16. In one respect they felt as Paul says Moses did;—in what? Heb. xi. 26.

42. The apostles continued to be as bold and diligent as ever;—how did they show this? What was their great work?

In reviewing this lesson, observe one great truth: God's church will always be protected. It may be "cast down, but not destroyed." It is like the burning bush that Moses saw—it may be encircled in flame, but it can not be consumed. Let each one ask himself, therefore, Have I a part and lot in the church of God?

CHAPTER VI.

LESSON.—1-15.

Wants of the Poor—Need of Deacons—Appointment of Deacons—Discussions of Unbelievers with Stephen—Accusation against Stephen.

1. FROM the foregoing accounts we see that a large body of persons, gathered from numerous countries, had become Christians in Jerusalem, and that they were there exposed to persecution. Having been cut off from friendly association with the Jews, they formed a community by themselves. They met together daily, and food was distributed to all the needy from a common stock. There were two classes of these: first, the foreign Jews, called Grecians, or Hellenists, because born in Grecian countries, and speaking the Grecian language; second, the native Jews called Hebrews. In one of these classes complaints arose;—which class was it? What was the cause of complaint?

2. When these complaints were heard, what was done by the apostles? What did they say respecting their official duties? What was the chief duty of the apostles? Luke ix. 2. They always continued to care for the poor and needy;—what proof have we of this? Gal. ii. 10.

3. Nevertheless, division of labor was necessary. A new office in the church was now called for. What measure did the apostles propose? What traits of character did this new office require? The church were called upon to choose the men whom they might think fit to fill this office, and the apostles said that they would publicly confirm the election.

4. In every church there are two kinds of business which must be attended to: these are the spiritual and the temporal. In this verse the apostles mark this distinction;—in what way? To which department of business did they wish to devote themselves?

5. How did the church receive the suggestion of the apostles? How many deacons did they elect? They did not choose *Hebrews*, but *Hellenists*;—what disposition did they show by this fact? The last person mentioned, however, was a native Greek, one who had been a heathen, was then proselyted to the Jewish religion, and afterward became a Christian.

6. To whom did the church present these deacons? They were then publicly ordained or set apart. In what manner was this done? This was an ancient method of inducting into office. Num. xxvii. 23.

7. The apostles now gave themselves more than ever to the preaching of the word;—what was the effect of their preaching? In what place was the greatest number of converts made? That was the last place in which we should have expected such a result;—why? A *particular*

class of converts is mentioned;—who were they? These persons were among the last in whom we should have expected to see such a change;—why? Luke xxiii. 10. Thus we see the power of the Holy Spirit blessing the word. These men had seen *miracles* wrought by Christ, but were not converted by them. They were subdued by the apostles' preaching of Christ. What does this fact teach us respecting the spread of religion?

8. In choosing deacons, the church looked for men "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom." Verse 3. Who is mentioned here as highly distinguished among them? How did he command the attention of the people?

9. Stephen met with warm opposition;—whence did it arise? In Jerusalem there were four hundred and eighty synagogues, and the Jews from any one of the foreign cities generally met by themselves. Five of these synagogues are here mentioned;—which is the first? The name here given to the first synagogue was the one which was used by the Romans to denote the descendants of those who had been taken as captives in war, made slaves, and then set at liberty. They thus became free citizens of Rome. Which is the second synagogue here mentioned? These people came from a place in the north of Africa, now called Barca. Simon, who bore a part of the Saviour's cross, was from that place. Which is the third synagogue referred to? These Jews were from Alexandria, in Egypt. It was built by Alexander the Great, and is the only city of Egypt mentioned in the New Testament. Which is the fourth synagogue spoken of? The Jews of this synagogue were from Cilicia, a province in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea. The apostle Paul was a native of this province, and was therefore called "Saul of Tarsus." Which is the

fifth synagogue here mentioned? That part of Asia which juts out from the great continent, and lies between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, was called Asia Minor; and that part of Asia Minor which lies around Ephesus was often called "Asia," by way of eminence. The people of this last synagogue were probably from the district of Ephesus.

10. Here we find that Stephen used *all* his talents, not only those which qualified him to be a deacon, but those also which fitted him to be an evangelist. This latter office required great wisdom;—in regard to this, what promise had our Lord given to his disciples? Luke xxi. 15. Stephen was one man against a host;—who had the victory in the argument?

11. Not being able to cope with Stephen in argument, what measure did they resort to? *Suborn* signifies the procuring of a person, by wrong or secret means, to be the agent of another. In English law, the *subornation of perjury* is defined by Judge Blackstone to be "the offense of procuring another to take such a false oath as would constitute perjury in the principal." With what crime did these men charge Stephen? This was a high crime. What was its punishment by the Jewish law? Lev. xxiv. 16.

12. They endeavored to excite the whole community against him. Three classes of persons are mentioned as being roused up to oppose Stephen;—who were they? Before what tribunal did they bring him?

13. These men made a show of honoring the law. They summoned witnesses;—of what character? What place did they mean by the phrase "this holy place?" Matt. iv. 5.

14. What were the words which these witnesses attributed to Stephen? These words *sounded like* those of Christ when he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ's

words were warnings against the consequences of impenitence and unbelief. Stephen had probably repeated them in their true sense. There are two ways of bearing false testimony respecting words. One is to attribute to a person words that he never uttered; another is to pervert the meaning of those which were uttered. Which of these methods did these witnesses take?

15. When the charge was made the Sanhedrim turned their eyes toward Stephen, waiting for his answer. What did they observe as to his appearance? When Moses came down from the mount something similar was observed as to *his* appearance;—what was that? We are not told whether this appearance was supernatural or not in the case of Stephen. Heavenly emotion in the soul, not affected, but real and strong, will give to a good man's countenance an angelic expression. Angels regard all the true followers of Christ as belonging to their heavenly brotherhood;—how do they make this manifest? Heb. i. 14.

CHAPTER VII.

LESSON I.—1-36.

Stephen's Defense—History of the Patriarchs—History of Moses.

1. AT the close of the last chapter we saw that Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrim. The president of that council is here mentioned;—who was he? What question did he ask? Can you recall the accusations to which he referred?

2. Stephen addressed his enemies in a respectful manner;—by what titles? What should we learn from this?

Where did Abraham live when God first appeared to him in a supernatural manner? The name of this country means "between the rivers;" it is situated between the Euphrates and the Tigris. After Abraham left his early home to go to Canaan, he lingered for some time in Charran, called in the Old Testament Haran, a city in the northern part of Mesopotamia.

3. What command was given to Abraham? Where is it recorded? Gen. xii. 1.

4. How did Abraham treat the command which he received? Observe, Mesopotamia was often spoken of as being included in the land of the Chaldeans. Where did Abraham's father die? Gen. xi. 32. What was his name? After that event where did Abraham go? At that time what was the land called? This emigration from the east toward the west was done for the sake of establishing a nation who should preserve the true religion, the Chaldeans having given themselves up to idolatry.

5. Although Abraham *resided* in the land of promise, he did not obtain complete possession. Nevertheless, what did God promise to him in the persons of his posterity? What made this promise so remarkable? How did Abraham express his astonishment at this promise? Gen. xv. 2-3. The promise was magnificent;—how did God express the multitude of Abraham's posterity? Gen. xv. 5. How did Moses afterward express the fulfillment of this promise? Deut. i. 10.

6. What gloomy prediction did God announce to Abraham? What "strange land" was that referred to? In what condition would his descendants be in that country? Until what period? Observe, the meaning of this phrase is, "until the expiration of four centuries." Round numbers are here used to denote the whole time in which

Abraham and his posterity were sojourners; that is, from the time the promise was given to Abraham until the organization of his descendants as a nation under Moses.

7. As God foresaw the wrongs which the Egyptians would inflict on the Israelites, what did he say would be the consequence? Can you remember in what manner the Egyptians were punished? At the same time what promise was given to the posterity of Abraham?

8. What did God give to Abraham? Where is the original account of this? Gen. xvii. 4-10. In performing his part of this covenant what did Abraham do after the birth of Isaac? As Jacob's sons were fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel, what are they here called? The covenant of which Stephen speaks in this verse related only to the Jews, or the *natural* descendants of Abraham. There was a previous covenant, however—"the covenant of the Messiah"—which had been given to Abraham. Where is the original account of this? Gen. xii. 1-3. This *covenant* of the Messiah embraces all the *spiritual* seed of Abraham;—who are they? Gal. iii. 7, 14, and 29. Notice these passages. It is an interesting question for each one to ask as to himself, Have I a part in the covenant of the Messiah?

9. Ten of Jacob's sons cherished an evil feeling toward their brethren;—what was it? What did it lead them to do? What land became the home of Joseph? Joseph was an exile and a slave. But he had one blessing that made up for every loss;—what was that?

10. How was the kindness of God shown toward Joseph in Egypt?

11. A great public calamity afflicted Egypt and Canaan;—what was it? What was the consequence to the patriarchs?

12. What news did Jacob hear from Egypt? You see that in Egypt the calamity had been foreseen and provided against;—do you remember by whom this was done? Whom did Jacob send into Egypt?

13. During their second visit two striking facts occurred. One was in the house of Joseph;—what was it? The other was in the court of the king;—what was that?

14. What did Joseph's discovery lead him to do? The number of Joseph's kindred is here estimated at seventy-five. In Genesis (xli. 27) the number is put at seventy. Stephen, however, includes the five sons of Manasseh and Ephraim, born in Egypt, who were omitted by Moses, because they did not emigrate with Jacob's family.

15. How long did Jacob and his sons continue in Egypt? When Jacob arrived in Egypt the king asked him how old he was;—what was the answer? Gen. xlvii.

9. How old was Jacob when he died? Gen. xlvii. 28.

16. Where were the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, buried by their descendants? Family tombs were always held in great reverence. Observe here, that Sychem was in the province of Samaria, and in the fourth chapter of John is called Sychar, the place where Christ conversed with the Samaritan woman at "Jacob's well." In the Old Testament it is called Shechem. Josh. xxiv. 32. In this latter passage it is said that JACOB bought the ground of Hamor (the same as Emmor), the father of Shechem. In the verse before us the word "Abraham" is evidently a misprint. The mistake probably originated with some ancient transcriber. Some of the old manuscripts have "our father," which, of course, refers to Jacob, not to Abraham. As Stephen was familiar with the Jewish history, it is not at all probable that he made the mistake in the sermon which Luke here records.

17. What promise is here meant? Gen. xv. 14-16. While the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage did they increase or diminish in number? The king of Egypt was vexed at this fact;—why? Ex. i. 7-9.

18. A new race of kings came upon the throne of Egypt, who felt not any debt of gratitude to the Israelites;—how is this expressed?

19. How did the new king treat the Israelites? What did the king fear? Ex. i. 10. What was the effect of his measures? Ex. i. 12.

20. During this time of trouble a child was born, who afterward became renowned;—what was his name? What is said of his personal appearance? How long was he concealed at home, in spite of the decree to destroy male children? The parents of this child would not obey a wicked law;—was it a good or a bad principle which influenced them? Heb. xi. 23.

21. The child's mother cast him on God's providence in a singular manner;—how? Ex. ii. 3. What was the result?

22. The child was educated like a prince;—how is this expressed? What kind of a character did he form? Eloquence is not essential to a great character;—how is this shown? Ex. iv. 10.

23. How old was Moses before he began that career which is described in the Bible? What did he then resolve to do? Although he lived in a palace, and was the companion of courtiers, yet he was not ashamed of his enslaved kindred. What principle influenced his conduct? Heb. xi. 24-26. In what respect is he an example to us?

24. On visiting his brethren, how did he show his sympathy for the oppressed?

25. At this time what did Moses expect of his brethren? In what was he disappointed? Oppression always tends to darken the mind and destroy moral energy. Such is the effect of slavery in every age.

26. The next day he witnessed a scene of painful strife;—between whom? He proposed to act as a mediator;—what did he say?

27. His kindness was treated with scorn;—by whom? What taunting question was put to him? A true peacemaker is often resisted thus by men in a state of excited passion;—nevertheless, what is our duty in such cases? Matt. v. 9.

28. Another question followed, more alarming than a taunt;—what was that? This question showed to Moses that his brethren were treacherous, and had circulated the report of his having killed an Egyptian. If the report had reached the king, what would have been the consequence?

29. On this account Moses went into exile;—whither? The land here mentioned is situated between the northern gulfs of the Red Sea. There Moses found a home. He married a daughter of Jethro, priest of Midian. How many sons had he? Their names were memorials of God's goodness;—what did they signify? Ex. xviii. 3, 4.

30. How long did Moses remain in that land? A revelation was then made to him;—at what place? How was it made? What excited the astonishment of Moses? Ex. iii. 3.

31. While he gazed on this spectacle how did Moses feel? Who then spoke to him?

32. In what character did the Almighty reveal himself? These words were adapted to encourage him;—why then did he tremble? From these words it appears that “the

angel of the Lord," mentioned in verse 30, was the same being who is called "the angel of the covenant," or "the angel-Jehovah" (as the Jews expressed it), frequently in the Old Testament. That was "the Son of God." This accords with the expression of Paul respecting Moses: "Esteeming the reproach of *Christ* greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. xi. 26.

33. Then what command did Moses receive? What was the reason for that command? This was a very ancient method of expressing reverence for a sacred place. The Jewish priests used to perform their religious services barefooted. In Eastern countries similar customs still continue; for, on entering a mosque, or temple, every one is obliged to put off his boots or sandals.

34. Although God had not interposed, as yet, to deliver the Israelites from bondage, it was not because he had been unmindful of them;—how did he express this? What did he say that he would now do? Whom would he send for this purpose? Observe, the Scriptures teach that God is everywhere, yet when he makes himself *manifest* to men, he is said to *come down* from heaven to earth. This mode of expression accords with our conceptions of the Most High, as being above us.

35. Stephen reminds the council of the treatment which Moses had received from their forefathers;—what was that? Nevertheless, what did God cause Moses to become? In these remarks Stephen is preparing the way to show that Jesus, the true Messiah, had been treated as Moses had been.

36. What did Moses accomplish for the Israelites? From what country did he bring them out? How did he prove his authority? What *kind* of signs did he show? The Red Sea lies between Egypt and the Desert of Ara-

bia Two great events occurred there;—what was the first? Ex. xiv. 21, 22. What was the second? Ex. xiv. 26–28. How long were they kept in the Desert of Arabia? How were they provided with food? Ex. xvi. 13–15. How were they provided with water? Ex. xvii. 6. True Christians are represented as being, in a spiritual sense, “Israelites indeed,” journeying through the world to the heavenly Canaan. They derive their sustenance from God alone. Of what was the manna an emblem? John vi. 49–51. What did the rock which became a spring of water represent? 1 Cor. x. 4. How may *we* receive the blessings which are thus exhibited to our view?

CHAPTER VII.

LESSON II.—37–60.

Stephen shows that Moses foretold the Coming of Christ—That the Israelites were disposed to rebel against Moses, and to fall into Idolatry—That they had rebelled against the Prophets—That at last they had rejected the Messiah himself—Stephen, the first Christian Martyr, is put to Death.

37. STEPHEN proceeds to quote a prophecy of Moses;—what was it? Where is it found? Deut. xviii. 18, 19. Peter had quoted the same prophecy. Acts iii. 22. To whom did Peter apply it? Christ was like Moses in this, he united in himself the characters of *prophet* and *lawgiver*;—but in what respect was Christ superior to Moses? Heb. iii. 5, 6. The Jews, to whom Stephen spoke, maintained that those who followed Christ forsook Moses;—do you see how this charge was disproved?

38. Stephen speaks further of the greatness and the

authority of Moses;—what does he call the body of Israelites whom Moses led? Observe, the word *ecclesia*, here translated “church,” means an assembly, and is so translated in Acts xix. 32. What does he say that Moses received on behalf of the people? Where did he receive them? Where are they recorded? Ex. xx. 1–17.

39. Notwithstanding all the glory with which God invested Moses how was he treated? What did the people desire to do in spite of his authority? How was Moses affected by their treatment of him? Ex. xvii. 4. How did the people try to get rid of Moses? Num. xiv. 4, 5.

40. What sinful project did they ask the brother of Moses to engage in with them? While Moses was on the mount receiving the oracles they spoke of him disrespectfully;—how?

41. They imitated their Egyptian masters in regard to a certain form of idolatry;—what was that? How did they worship the idol? How did they express their joy? Ex. xxxii. 6. Why were these things recounted? 1 Cor. x. 6, 7.

42. When they turned away from God he turned away from them the manifestations of favor;—how is this expressed? The sorest punishment of a sinner is to give him up to the power and the consequences of sin;—how did the Israelites experience the truth of this? Ps. cvi. 32–41. The Israelites pretended to worship God by means of idols. Stephen quotes an old prophet to show that God would not accept such worship. What appeal did the prophet make on this point? Amos v. 25, 26.

43. What were the names of the idols which the Israelites adopted? To the first of these children were offered in sacrifice. This idol-worship was abominable and cruel. What law was given to the Israelites in regard to this?

Lev. xx. 1-3. Remphan was also called Chiun, worshiped under the image of a star, probably to denote Saturn. Of the god Saturn the story was that he ate his own children. What was the punishment threatened against the nation for upholding idolatry?

44. In the tabernacle which Moses built there were no idols;—what did it contain? Heb. ix. 4, 5. What does Stephen call that tabernacle in this verse? Who gave Moses the pattern of it? Observe, this tabernacle was movable; it could be taken to pieces, and carried about from one place to another. It was about fifty-five feet long, eighteen broad, and eighteen high.

45. Stephen refers to Joshua, who succeeded Moses. Joshua is a Hebrew name, of which Jesus is the Greek. Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan;—why is it here called “the possession of the Gentiles?” These heathen were not all driven out at once;—who was the king that gained the final victories over them? The descendants of those who built the tabernacle did not abandon it;—into what land did they bear it?

46. How was David distinguished? He desired to build a *permanent* place of worship, that is, a temple;—why was he not permitted to do it? 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, 3.

47. David prepared the materials, but who built the temple?

48. The Jews gloried much in their temple-service, as if that could save them of itself. Stephen, therefore, quotes from the dedicatory prayer of Solomon a very important truth;—what is that? How did Solomon express this? 1 Kings viii. 27.

49, 50. This error of the Jews Isaiah had rebuked before. Stephen therefore quotes that prophet;—by what figures does he denote the majesty of God? What appeal does he

make respecting God as the owner of the universe? Where are these sublime expressions found? Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

51. Here Stephen ceases to discourse on the Jewish history. Evidently, he saw that his audience were opposed to the lessons which he was drawing from it. By what figurative expression does he denote their obstinacy? He saw that the evil passions of their *hearts* were unrestrained;—how does he denote this? Whom does he say that they habitually resisted? Whose bad example did they follow?

52. The nation had always opposed the prophets;—what appeal does he make to them respecting that? Jesus had charged them with the same crime;—what had he said? Matt. xxiii. 37. According to the general belief Isaiah had been sawn asunder, and Jeremiah had been stoned to death. They had killed those who foretold the Messiah;—how did they fill up the measure of their iniquity at last?

53. They gloried in the law? Angels had officiated in revealing it;—yet how had they treated it? Angels often made revelations under the Old Testament dispensation. It was a common belief of the Jews that heavenly hosts hovered around Mount Sinai when the law was given. What does Paul call the angels of God? Heb. i. 14.

54. Stephen's sermon abruptly closes. What effect did these truths have on the hearts of the hearers? What outward signs of rage did they exhibit?

55. Their souls were filled with wicked and lawless anger, but Stephen's soul was filled with a different influence;—what was that? He turned his eyes from earth toward heaven;—what did he behold?

56. Immediately he declared the glorious vision;—what did he say?

57. As if shocked with blasphemy, what did they at once do?

58. What did the law against blasphemy command? Lev. xxiv. 14-16. No legal decision had been given against Stephen, and the trial ended in a riot. No doubt, however, the council connived at this. Where did they carry Stephen? The false witnesses against Stephen joined in the riot, and they cast off their robes for this purpose;—in whose charge did they leave them? This “young man” was afterward converted, and took another name;—what was that? He deeply repented of having had any thing to do with the murder of Stephen;—what confessor did he make? Acts xxii. 20.

59. In his last moments, in what was Stephen engaged? To whom did he address his last prayer for his own soul?

60. As the stones were about to fall on the first Christian martyr, what attitude did he assume? For whom did he offer his last prayer? What did he desire? Whose example did he imitate in this? The writer uses a beautiful expression to denote a Christian death;—what is it? Jesus used a similar expression in regard to the death of Lazarus. It shows that a Christian should not fear death. Death is called by some “the king of terrors.” How may we obtain a victory over him? 1 Cor. xv 57.

CHAPTER VIII.

LESSON I.—1-17.

Persecution at Jerusalem—The Gospel carried to Samaria—A Sorcerer Baptized—The Gifts of the Holy Spirit granted to the Converts.

1. THE last chapter closed with an account of the death of Stephen. When his murderers ran upon him they left their mantles in charge of Saul. Was he, however, acting heartily with them? The death of Stephen was like the first blast of a storm;—what followed? What became of the chief portion of the church? Who remained? Undoubtedly, by this time, the council stood in awe of the apostles. They stood like “the staff of a regiment,” whose soldiers have been scattered, but which may be formed again and led on to battle.

2. Although the body of Stephen was not buried immediately after death, according to the Jewish custom, it was not suffered to remain without a funeral;—what was done with it? These men were like Joseph of Arimathea;—why? What duty, or what duties, may we learn from their conduct?

3. At this time who was the leading persecutor? He spared neither age or sex;—how did he conduct the persecution?

4. The evil was overruled for good;—how? Every private Christian may do something for the spread of the gospel; and when *all* who compose a church are faithful the cause of Christ must conquer.

5. Who is now brought to view as a preacher? He was

not an apostle, but a deacon, whose election is mentioned. Acts vi. 5. Where was his home? Acts xxi. 8. Where did he carry the gospel? What was the main subject of his preaching? Who founded this city where Philip preached? 1 Kings xvi. 23, 24.

6. How did the people of this city receive Philip?

7. What proofs did Philip give of his authority as a witness for Christ? Jesus had given to his disciples the promise, "The works that I do shall ye do also." Have we any account of works like these performed by Christ? Mark i. 23-27.

8. Here was a great religious awakening;—what was the effect? Is this always the effect of true religion? Rom. xiv. 17.

9. A notorious impostor is here mentioned;—what was his name? What did he practice? His art was often called magic, from the Eastern magi, who pretended to foretell the future by means of stars; others did it by lot, entrails of animals, etc. The people of Samaria were greatly astonished and fascinated by Simon;—how is this expressed? He was a great boaster;—in what respect? Real greatness is humble;—how did the apostles speak of their mighty works? Acts iii. 12.

10. What had the people thought of Simon? To what agency did they attribute his arts?

11. They had seen many of his magical tricks, but had never seen through them;—what was the consequence?

12. Yet when Philip preached the gospel to them, how were their minds affected? How did they profess their faith?

13. How was Simon affected? But what chiefly engaged *his* attention? He knew that his own works were tricks, and he saw that those of Philip were realities. Thus, al-

though he was a bad man, he furnished evidence of the truth of Christianity.

14. The apostles at Jerusalem, seeing that a new church was rising up in Samaria, sent men to oversee the work ;—who were they ? The Papists say that Peter was superior in office to the other apostles ;—does this verse prove that, or the contrary ? They say, that as chief or primate in the church, the pope is his successor ;—would any body of men now *send* a pope to minister in an infant church ? For what purposes were Peter and John sent to Samaria ?

15. When the apostles arrived in Samaria, what blessing did they seek for the young converts ?

16. Why did they pray for this blessing particularly ? But can any be truly converted without the influence of the Holy Spirit ? John iii. 5. We see, therefore, that by the gifts of the Holy Ghost are meant the *miraculous* gifts of power, which Christ had promised to the first disciples. Mark xvi. 17, 18.

17. After prayer what did the apostles do ? This was an outward sign ;—what followed ? In that age, when impostors and magic arts were so common, real miracles were necessary in order to establish the truth of Christianity as a divine religion, and to show that it *alone* was, as a religion, “the great power of God.” On this point Paul wrote to the early Christians, urging them not to think too much of the *outward* gifts, because there was *for them* something better ;—what was that ? 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. Outward signs were not for the benefit of Christians ;—but for whom ? 1 Cor. xiv. 22. Outward signs have passed away, but we should seek that gift of the Spirit that abideth forever ;—what is that ? 1 Cor. xiii. 8. What great things does Paul say a man may do and yet not have this grace ? 1 Cor. xiii. 3. What is the best

proof that one has this better gift or grace? John xiv. 23. The apostle John declares that true love to Christ, faith, obedience, perseverance, and salvation all go together, and are never separated;—where does he show this? 1 John v. 1-4. How important then is the question, Have I a true, a supreme love to Christ!

CHAPTER VIII.

LESSON II.—18-40.

Simon Magus Unmasked—The Ethiopian Convert.

WE have already seen that Simon Magus was astonished to behold the miracles wrought by Philip, and that he fully *believed in their reality*. It is clear, however, that his belief went no further, and that he did not apprehend the *doctrines* which Philip taught.

18. What fact is here mentioned which Simon witnessed with astonishment? What offer did he make to the apostles?

19. He did not ask merely that he might *receive* the gifts of the Spirit, but something beyond that;—what was it? Observe, that which he wished to buy was apostolic power—"Give me power and I will give you money." Hence came the word *simony*, which means, "making a trade of religion."

20. How did Peter express his indignation? What reason did he assign for it? Some have thought that Peter pronounced a curse on Simon, and doomed him to perdition. But if that had been so, the apostle would not have exhorted him to seek salvation. The words of Peter,

therefore, denote no more than his scorn of the "wages of iniquity," and the perishing nature of money, together with the doom that Simon's sin would incur unless he should repent.

21. Although Simon had *professed* Christianity, yet of what was he destitute? It is said that he believed, but his faith was defective;—why? True faith is something more than acknowledging the reality of miracles or other evidences of Christianity;—in what respect? Rom. x. 10.

22. Peter exhorts Simon to two great duties;—what was the first? What was the second?

23. The apostle sets forth the bad condition of Simon under two aspects: 1. The evil nature of his sin;—how does he express this? 2. The power of sin;—how is this denoted? Some have thought that a *very bad* man ought not to pray;—what does Peter teach on that point? It should be remembered, however, that there can be no true prayer for pardon without sorrow for the sin. Peter connects one with the other;—can they ever be separated?

24. We see no evidence that Simon prayed for himself;—what request did he make? Which feeling seems to prevail in him, sorrow for sin or fear of punishment? Which prevails in the true penitent? Historians relate that this Simon became the leader of a corrupt sect, who mixed Christian doctrines with enormous errors. This is probable, but the evidence is not decisive.

25. The apostles confirmed the mission of Philip;—how? On their way homeward what did they do? So we see that there was joy in the villages but gloom in the great metropolises.

26. Philip had been preaching in Samaria, in the northern part of Palestine; now he is sent to the south;—what commission did he receive? From whom did he receive it?

He was to pass by Jerusalem and go to Gaza, about forty-six miles southwest of the metropolis. Christ's ministers are not always sent in flowery paths;—in what condition was this part of the country?

27. How did Philip answer the message? On his way he saw a traveler;—of what country? The inhabitants of that land were called by the Greeks, "aithiops," that is, "burnt faces." It lies in Africa, south of Egypt, west of the Red Sea. Who is mentioned as the queen of that country? This name was as common among Ethiopian queens as Pharaoh was among Egyptian kings. What office did this man hold? He had been traveling hundreds of miles for what purpose? He was one of a class for whom Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, had offered special prayer;—what class? 1 Kings viii. 41-43.

28. In what direction was this man traveling? In what manner did he travel? A roll of Scripture was in his hand;—what was it? Here is proof that he was an earnest inquirer after religious knowledge;—what is it?

29. To this man God "had regard;"—how is this shown? By a common mode of speech, the chariot is here used for the person in it.

30. In what manner did Philip obey the divine direction? It is common in Eastern countries, more than in ours, for persons to read *aloud*;—what proof is there that this man was doing so? Philip embraced the opportunity to draw him into conversation;—what question did he ask?

31. The traveler acknowledged his need of teaching;—in what way? How did he treat the evangelist?

32. The part of Isaiah which he was reading we now call the fifty-third chapter. The subject is the death of Christ. It was written seven centuries before the Christian era. How does the prophet exhibit the meekness of Christ?

33. The prophet foresaw that Christ would be treated with injustice and be abandoned;—how does he express this?

34. What question did the traveler ask the evangelist?

35. How did Philip answer it? What follows shows that Philip gave to this inquirer a full account of the Christian religion, as to its history, doctrines, and ordinances.

36. As they journeyed to what did they come? The Ethiopian shows that he wished to be a *practical* Christian;—how? He seemed to be pleased with the sight of the water;—why?

37. Philip shows the new disciple that an outward observance would be of no worth in itself;—in what way does he denote this? What confession of faith did the Ethiopian then make? You perceive that the short phrase, “he preached Jesus,” includes much;—what then does this confession of faith include?

38. What command did Philip give? He and the new convert both left the chariot; where did they go? What act did Philip then perform?

39. The ordinance having been performed, what did they do next? The disciple, no doubt, would have been pleased if he could have retained the teacher with him. But God had other work for his servant;—how is this shown? By a divine impulse Philip was hastened away;—where did the baptized disciple go? In what state of mind? Philip had found him in a state of doubt and perplexity, but left him in a very different condition;—what may we learn from this change?

40. Philip had returned northward;—where was he next heard of? That place was called Ashdod in ancient days. 1 Sam. vi. 17. It was about thirty miles from Gaza.

From that place he went to the city of his residence, which we have already referred to;—where was that? How did he employ himself on the way? What must have been his character as a missionary? This chapter contains an interesting history. We see the gospel driven from Jerusalem, welcomed in Samaria, and borne to Ethiopia. It meets severe struggles, yet constantly triumphs. Thus has it ever been. The struggle is still going on. What shall be the result? Isa. lxi. 11. Every friend of the gospel may do something;—according to what rule should we contribute to this service? Gal. vi. 9, 10.

CHAPTER IX.

LESSON I.—1-22.

Saul, the Persecutor, arrested in his Course—Converted to Christ—Called to be an Apostle—Is Cured of his Blindness, is Baptized, and Preaches the Gospel.

1. WE have already had occasion to notice the young man who sympathized with the murderers of Stephen, and who took charge of their mantles while they were stoning him to death. He is now brought to view again. What spirit did he exhibit? To whom did he go to obtain a sanction to his proceedings?

2. Having driven the Christians from Jerusalem, he saw how readily they would seek refuge in Damascus, the capital of Syria, 150 miles distant. It is an ancient city, and is mentioned in the book of Genesis xv. 2, as the native place of Eliezer, Abraham's servant. It has always figured in history, and Damascus silks are, to this day, well known

in our marts of trade. In the time of the apostles it was under the government of the Romans, but the number of Jews in it was large, and they enjoyed many privileges. To whom were Saul's letters directed? What was he commissioned to do? The Jews had no political power in Syria, but the governor favored them;—what proof have we of this? 2 Cor. xi. 32.

3. As Saul drew near Damascus, exulting in his power, he was stopped short in his career;—how?

4. What was the effect of this appearance on Saul? A voice of majesty addressed him;—what appeal did it utter?

5. The persecutor was overwhelmed. He recognized the voice as one of a celestial personage;—what question did he ask? The answer was direct and plain;—what was it? When Christ was on earth he taught that what was done to his people, for his sake, was done to him. Where is this recorded? Matt. xxv. 40. The voice rebuked Saul by the use of a well-known proverb. The meaning of it is, that as they who kick against goads, or spikes, only wound themselves, so Saul was injuring himself by his persecution, but not the cause of Christ. What is the proverb? The proverb arose from the fact, that often a stubborn ox, urged on by a goad, or sharp-pointed instrument like that which was used in driving cattle, would kick against the point of steel, or iron, and wound himself without injuring the driver.

6. The pride of Saul was now abased. He surrenders himself at once. What question did he address to Jesus as his acknowledged Lord? How does that question prove his submission to have been immediate and entire? Some have doubted whether *sudden* conversions are ever real and lasting;—what does this case teach us on that

point? What direction did Saul receive in order to ascertain his duty? It was Christ's will that Saul should be dependent on a Christian brother for further communications;—can you think of any reasons for this arrangement?

7.~Sudden terror often takes away the power of speech. It had this effect on Saul's companions. What did they hear? Did they also "discern the form" of the Son of God? From Saul's own account of this, addressed to an assembly of Jews (Acts xxii. 9), we learn two additional particulars: 1. The men who were with him saw "the light," but not the form in the midst of it; 2. They heard a sound, or voice, but understood not what the voice uttered. In what language did the voice speak? Acts xxvi. 14. The "light" here spoken of was that *glory of the Lord* which Stephen saw just before his death. Acts vii. 55. Moreover, it is believed to have been the same peculiar manifestation which the Jews called *the Shechinah*, in which the Lord had appeared to the Israelites in ancient days. Ex. xiii. 21, 22; Hab. iii. 3, 4.

8. When Saul arose from the earth in what condition was he? The supernatural light was more *intense* in its manifestation to Saul than to the rest of the company;—what proof have we of this? He entered Damascus in a manner different from that which he had expected. He may have had the high priest's commission in his pocket, but he had a new and better one in his heart.

9. How long did he continue blind? Mental anxiety took away his desire for food. How long did he fast?

10. What Christian citizen of Damascus is mentioned here? How did Christ reveal himself to that man? The Greeks have a tradition that this person was one of "the seventy-two disciples." At this day the Christians and

Mohammedans of Damascus assert that they can point out the place of his residence.

11. What direction did this disciple receive? The street here mentioned is still to be seen at Damascus. In what terms did our Lord announce Saul's conversion? From this phrase we may learn that there is a great difference between "saying prayers" and praying;—why may we draw this inference?

12. Our Lord informed his disciple that the way had been prepared for the fulfillment of his mission;—in what manner had this been done?

13. Ananias was astonished. The very name of Saul was terrible to him. He did not consider at once what the Lord had said respecting his way having been prepared. Whenever God bids us do any thing, our wisdom appears in obedience. We may trust in him to remove obstacles. How did Ananias express his fear?

14. The news of Saul's commission had already reached Damascus;—how does this appear? How does Ananias denote true Christians? This proves that the early Christians habitually worshiped Christ;—how does it prove this? It may be well to observe in this connection, that seventy years after the death of Christ, Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, wrote to the emperor Trajan respecting Christians this official report: "Their account is, that they are accustomed, on a stated day, to assemble before sunrise, and to join together in singing hymns to Christ, as to a Deity," etc.

15. How did the Lord overrule the objections of Ananias? You perceive here that Saul's commission was that of a missionary to the heathen. How did he afterward speak of this? Gal. i. 15, 16.

16. Saul had no promise of ease and comfort in this

world;—what prospect was opened to his view? How did he habitually feel in regard to this point? Rom. v. 3.

17. Ananias obeyed. How did he address Saul? What change in his state of mind did this indicate? How did he make Saul understand who was meant by the phrase, “the Lord.” For what purposes did he declare himself to have been sent? What symbol did he use to express his authority?

18. What benefit did Saul immediately receive? In the East many persons have been affected with a disease of the eye, caused by excessive light and heat. The humors of the eye become solid, and take the form of scales. In these cases, however, the disease and cure are both of slow progress. If the affection of Saul were of this nature, its cause and cure were, nevertheless, miraculous. Just as in the miracle of Cana, Christ did by a word what God does gradually by laws of nature—that is, he converted water into a liquid bearing all the properties of the “fruit of the vine.” When Saul received his sight, what did he do immediately? What command had Christ given respecting this?

19. His mind being at ease, his appetite for food returned;—what followed? With whom did he now associate? Doubtless there was great joy in that city. A church had probably been formed there, and he who had left his home as a persecutor now sits like “a little child” at the feet of Christian brethren.

20. He had received letters to the officers of the synagogues. For what purpose did he now visit them?

21. What was the effect? What was the substance of their conversation?

22. The Jews resisted his words;—how did he meet them? He had but one object.—what was that? In

reasoning with Jews whence would he naturally draw his arguments? How had his education fitted him for that work? With what feelings did Saul prosecute that work? Rom. i. 16, and Gal. vi. 14. Blessed are they who sympathize with him in this. What will be their destiny? 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

CHAPTER IX.

LESSON II.—23—43.

The Conspiracy against Saul—His Escape—His Visit to Jerusalem—His Escape to Cesarea—Peace among the Churches—Miracles of Peter.

23. AFTER Saul's conversion he left Damascus, and went into another country;—what country was that? Gal. i. 17. Luke gives no account of that journey, but alludes in this verse to the period of his absence by saying, "after many days were fulfilled." When Saul returned to Damascus a plot was laid against him;—by whom? For what purpose?

24. They showed great patience and determination;—how? The Jews were favored in their schemes by the government of Damascus;—who was the ruler in power at that time? 2 Cor. xi. 32.

25. Saul's foes watched the *gates*, but he left the city without passing through the gates;—how was this done? A similar mode of escape was used by the Israelitish spies on the wall of Jericho. Josh. ii. 15. In walled cities it has often been practiced in times of peril.

26. Three years had now elapsed from the time of his conversion;—where did he go? For what purpose? Gal.

i. 18. In that city the terror of his name had not yet passed away;—how did the disciples feel toward him?

27. In this case what friendly office did Barnabas perform? To what apostles, particularly, did Barnabas present Saul? Gal. i. 18, 19.

28. The confidence of the apostles having been gained, on what terms did Saul live with them during his visit?

29. How did he make manifest the reality of his conversion? In Jerusalem there were many Jews who had been born in Grecian cities, and who used the Greek language. Saul was familiar with this;—what use did he make of it? As they could not overthrow him in argument, what other method did they try?

30. His brethren sought a refuge for him in a city of Palestine, on the sea-coast, where the Romans would protect him;—what city is that? From that place whither did he go?

31. At the beginning of this book we read of “the church,” now we read of “the churches;”—what countries did they chiefly occupy? What blessing did they enjoy? What was the effect of it? In a season of quiet and peace some churches become indolent, and on that account are diminished;—how was it with the early churches? As to the freedom from persecution here mentioned, one thing which helped the Christians was this: the Roman emperor, Caligula, a whimsical and cruel man, commanded that his statue should be placed in the Jewish temple, in the inner sanctuary. This matter so engaged the attention of the Jews, and so deeply agitated them, that their spirit of persecution against the Christians was relaxed. Thus evil was overruled for good.

32. Saul having returned to Tarsus, the historian now leaves him for a time, and resumes his account of Peter.

On one of his missionary journeys he visited a town on the Mediterranean Sea, twenty-two miles northwest of Jerusalem;—what was its name? There his attention was called to a man in affliction;—what was his name? What was his condition?

33. What miracle did Peter perform? He was very careful to show that he was only the *instrument*, not the author of the work;—how did he do this? What did Peter *prove* by this work?

34. What was the effect of this miracle? Saron is the same as Sharon, mentioned by the prophets for its fertility and beauty. Isa. xxxv. 2.

36. Not far from Lydda was one of the oldest sea-ports of the world—the place whence the prophet Jonah sailed on his celebrated voyage;—what was it called? It is now called Jaffa, or Iaffa. Its name occurs in the history of the crusades, and of Napoleon's expedition into Syria. What disciple is mentioned as a resident of that place? Her name is given both in Syriac and Greek. The English of it is Gazelle; for it has always been customary in Eastern lands to give the names of gentle and favorite animals to young females. What was the *character* of this disciple?

37. She became sick and died;—what preparation had they made for her burial? Care was taken to prevent premature interment. In this customary washing the modern Jews, in the East, use roses and chamomile with the water.

38. Lydda was about six miles from Joppa. To whom, in Joppa, did the disciples of Lydda send a message? What was the message? As yet no apostle had raised the dead. Perhaps, however, the disciples at Lydda knew that the power to do it had been promised by Christ to his

apostles. They did not ask for such a miracle; yet it seems that they did not think the case beyond the reach of hope.

39. How did Peter treat the message? Arrived at the house of mourning where did they lead him? There was a group, not of hired, but of sincere mourners;—of whom was it composed? How did they express their regard for Dorcas?

40. Peter's heart was moved. He wished to be alone. Perhaps he desired, by prayer and supplication, to ascertain the will of God. How did the result show this?

41. Who were the first witnesses of this miracle? In those days all Christians were called "saints;"—why? To Dorcas herself a return to life in this world was no present *gain*;—to whom was it so?

42. What was the effect of this miracle? What was the design of the miracles? How may that design now be accomplished in respect to ourselves? Observe, this is the last of the miracles of mercy wrought in Palestine on behalf of the Jews. The gospel was now going forth to the Gentiles or Heathen, and the other miracles of which we read were wrought for the confirmation of the gospel among them.

CHAPTER X.

LESSON I.—1-24.

The Roman Centurion's Vision—His Embassy to Peter—Peter's Vision Preparatory to his Mission—His Journey to Cesarea.

1. HITHERTO the Christian churches, of which we have

read in this history, were composed of Jews. Now we read of the first Gentile family who were converted and baptized. Gentile churches are now numerous, and to consider their origin, as set before us in this chapter, is like tracing a mighty river to its source. A Roman centurion, or commander of a hundred soldiers, is here mentioned; what was his name? The family of the Cornelii were celebrated in Rome. What was his band or *company* called?

2. This man was not an idolater. He did not worship Jupiter or Mars, like other Romans;—what is said of his character? The use of money is a test of character;—what is said of him on this point?

3. One day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of public evening prayer, he heard his name called aloud;—by whom?

4. What effect did this sudden appearance produce on the mind of the centurion? What expression of surprise did he utter? What figurative language did the angel use to denote the acceptance of the centurion's offerings?

5. To introduce Christianity among the heathen was an errand worthy of the mission of an angel. Nevertheless, Christ had not appointed angels to preach the gospel. What direction, therefore, did the angel give?

6. Where was Peter at this time? For what purpose was Cornelius to send for him? In this way the prayers of Cornelius were answered. Although he was a good man he had much to learn, and he valued the knowledge of God "more than all riches."

7. In obedience to the angel what did the centurion immediately do?

8. It was to the honor of Cornelius to have such men in his household;—what did he communicate to them?

9. About noon the next day how was Peter employed?

10. While food was being prepared for Peter in what extraordinary condition was he? Observe, the Greek word translated *trance*—is that one from which comes our English word *extasy*. It denotes a state in which the mind is so much absorbed in objects of thought that the senses are suspended. External objects are not perceived.

11, 12. While Peter was in this state what objects of contemplation engaged him?

13. What command came to Peter?

14. Under the influence of his Jewish education Peter regarded this as a trial of his fidelity;—what, therefore, did he reply? On what ground would a Jew regard these animals as unclean? Lev. xx. 25, 26.

15. The celestial voice uttered a second command;—what was that? A greater than Moses is here. The Lawgiver declares the ceremonial law abolished. The old distinction between clean and unclean meats, between Jews and Gentiles, was here set aside. Peter so understood the matter; and no wonder that he did, for the Jews used to consider unclean animals a representation of the Gentiles.

16. How often was the vision repeated?

17. God's providence interpreted the meaning of the vision. At this time who stood at Simon's gate?

18. For whom did they inquire?

19. The fact of their arrival was revealed to Peter;—how?

20. What reason had Peter to believe that the errand of these messengers would give the right interpretation of the vision?

21. In what manner did Peter make himself known to the messengers?

22. Doubtless the messengers were now assured that the hand of God was in this matter. Probably they had said one to another at the gate, "Here is the house by the sea-side; there is the tan-yard—so far the vision is true; now, if a man named Simon Peter is a guest here, we may be sure that our centurion has been directed by an angel." What did they say of the character of Cornelius? They indicated to Peter that he was not an idolater;—how? What revelation did they say that Cornelius had received?

23. How were the messengers received? When did they return? Peter knew that his conduct would be called in question by scrupulous Jews;—whom did he take as witnesses?

24. When did they reach Cesarea? Cornelius had strong confidence that his messengers would return immediately, and that Peter would be with them;—how did he show this? He not only desired the knowledge of salvation for himself, but also for his neighbors;—how did he show this? He manifested the same ^espirit as Andrew and Philip when they first found the Messiah;—in what respect? John i. 41, 45. True religion expands the heart. He who enjoys it wishes all to share it. What use should we make of the example of Cornelius? Observe how willing is God to meet the desires of honest and earnest inquirers after truth;—what promise is given to such persons? Prov. ii. 1-5. What promises has Christ given to them? Matt. vii. 7, 8.

CHAPTER X.

LESSON II.—25-48.

Peter refuses to receive Homage—Calls for a Statement of the Reasons which led Cornelius to send for him—Preaches Jesus as the Messiah—Recognizes his Audience as True Converts.

25. As Peter entered the house of Cornelius in what manner was he received?

26. Peter intimates that Cornelius thought him to be *more* than a man;—how does he do this? It follows from this that man-worship is wrong. Jesus Christ always received the worship that was offered him. Matt. viii. 2, 3. Considering this in connection with Peter's words what may we infer respecting Christ?

27. Within the house an agreeable scene was before the eyes of Peter;—what was it?

28. To what well-known fact did Peter refer as he began to speak? He then gave the true interpretation of the vision at Joppa;—what was it?

29. Peter did not wish to appear to any of the assembly as an intruder;—what demand, therefore, did he make?

30. Who answered? He is very particular in giving an account of the message from Heaven. What does he say as to the time of it? How was he engaged? What form did the angel assume?

31. What testimony did the angel bear?

32. What direction did he give?

33. How did the centurion express his welcome to Peter? How did he state the object of the meeting?

34. Pèter begins his discourse by repeating the lesson taught by the vision;—in what form does he now express it? The apostle had once thought differently;—in what respect?

35. Peter now asserts the *Christian* doctrine in opposition to the *Jewish*;—what is that? Jesus had taught the same truth to a Samaritan;—in what words? John iv. 22-24. Jesus had foretold the triumph of this truth over Judaism;—when? Matt. viii. 10-12. From these words of Jesus what shall we infer respecting those who have the true light, and yet reject or slight it?

36. To whom does Peter say that the word of the gospel was *first* sent? What is the character of this gospel? Paul taught the same doctrine;—where? Eph. ii. 12-14. The Jews had taught that the true Messiah was to be only for *them*;—what does Peter teach on that point?

37. Where does Peter say the gospel was published? About what time did this publication commence?

38. The word Messiah, or Christ, means “the anointed one.” Prophets, priests, and kings received the sacred unction. The promised Saviour, the great Prophet, Priest, and King, was God’s Messiah;—how was he said to be anointed? How was this exhibited at the time of his baptism? What did Isaiah say respecting this sacred anointing? Isa. lxi. 1. How does Peter describe the life of Jesus?

39. Cornelius had heard rumors of these things which Jesus did; now he hears better testimony;—what was that? In the view of a Roman crucifixion was a great disgrace; Peter does not conceal it;—what does he say?

40. Nevertheless, how did God vindicate the character of “the crucified one?”

41. Who were the witnesses of this great fact?

42. Peter now states his *authority* as a preacher;—from whom was it received? He was to make known the *majesty* of Christ;—in what character? The apostle speaks of the *whole human race* as being destined to meet Christ in judgment;—how does he express this idea?

43. The religion of the Old Testament consisted mainly in believing in a “Messiah to come;”—how does the apostle express this? What great *benefit* is received through faith in the true Messiah? This is the greatest of all blessings. He who has this is rich indeed. Observe now the great truths preached by Peter in this first sermon to a heathen audience. Review them. 1. In the sight of God the people of all nations are placed on a moral level;—where is this expressed? 2. The life and works of Jesus proved his Messiahship;—how is this taught? 3. The Messiah, risen from the dead, is to be the final judge of all;—in what words is this declared? 4. Through faith in his name salvation is offered to all;—how is this declared? Peter closes his sermon with the doctrine of “justification by faith.”

44. The apostle’s preaching was confirmed by marvelous influences, which remind us of the day of Pentecost;—in what manner?

45. The signs were obvious to all. Here was *proof* that “God is no respecter of persons.” How were the Christian *Jews* affected when they saw this?

46. What were the signs of this miraculous influence?

47. As God himself acknowledged these persons to be Christians, Peter declares that they ought to be acknowledged by man as such;—how does he express this?

48. In what manner did he command this acknowledgment to be made? What did the reception of this rite declare to all? Gal. iii. 27. This was a good profession.

Is it the duty of all to make it in sincerity? Acts ii. 38.
Why? Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

CHAPTER XI.

LESSON.—1-30.

Peter's Defense of his Conduct—Effect—Conversion of Heathen—
The name of "Christian"—Christian Prophets—Christian Benevo-
lence.

1. THE last chapter contained an account of the introduction of the Gentiles into the Christian church. For two thousand years the distinction between Jew and Gentile had been kept up, but now the middle wall of partition is broken down. This event was accomplished under the ministration of Peter. Who heard of this remarkable proceeding?

2. On this point who contended with Peter?

3. Of what did they complain? This shows that they did not regard Peter as a pope.

4. Peter was not offended. How did he defend his conduct? What lesson may we draw from this?

5. At what point did he begin his narrative?

6. He speaks of having been thoroughly engrossed with the matter;—how does he express this?

7. What does he say of the message from heaven?

8. He shows his Jewish brethren that his views had been the same as theirs;—how?

9. How does he say that his scruples were removed?

10. What does he say of the repetition of the revelation?

11. How did God's providence begin the interpretation of it?

12. Under what authority did he act? How many witnesses did he take with him?

13. What was done in Cesarea to correspond with what was done in Joppa?

14. How did the angel characterize the gospel?

15. He declares that the miracle of Pentecost was repeated;—how does he denote this?

16. What words of Christ came to his memory? Why were these miraculous impartations of the Spirit compared to a baptism? Acts ii. 2-4.

17. Having given a simple statement of the facts, what appeal does he make?

18. How did the objectors answer this appeal? What feelings did their words imply? Here it may be well to recollect that Christ had denoted the apostolical work of Peter in figurative terms, by saying, "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Peter had turned one of these keys on the day of Pentecost, and admitted the Jews; he had turned the other at Cesarea, and had admitted the Gentiles.

19. The historian having informed us of the introduction of Christianity among the heathen, now pursues the subject to the close of the book, and proceeds to inform us of the rise of the first church, which was formed of Grecian converts. It was cradled by a storm of persecution;—what persecution was it? What church did it scatter abroad? To what places did they go? Phenice lay along the coast of Syria, north of Galilee, on the Mediterranean Sea. Cyprus was an island in the Mediterranean, off the coast of Cilicia. Antioch was the capital of Syria, a splendid city situated on the Orontes. It was distinguished for religious liberty, that is, the free exercise of all religions. On this account

it was a good place of refuge. Here the exiled Christians preached the gospel ;—to whom ?

20. But a number of Cyprian and Cyrenean Christians pursued a different course ;—in what respect ? These men, having always been accustomed to mingle with Gentiles, when they found “ an open door ” at Antioch, could not but seize their opportunity. Cyrene was a Roman colony on the coast of Africa ; the Greek language, however, was familiar to the men of Cyrene, as well as of Cyprus. You perceive that these traveling Christians did not leave their religion at home ;—what proof is there of this ?

21. What proof did these disciples have that God approved their work ? The event was astonishing, just as much so as if in our day a multitude of Eastern Brahmins should be converted under the first sermons of an American missionary. In such a case to what power should we attribute the result ?

22. The news of the event flew abroad ;—who were particularly interested in hearing it ? Whom did they send to Antioch ? This man was a resident of Cyprus, and yet of Levitical origin. On these accounts he was particularly *adapted* to this mission ;—why ?

23. When he reached Antioch he was not disappointed ;—how did he evidently feel ? What occasioned these emotions ? He knew that the converts would encounter many difficulties ;—to what did he therefore urge them ? There is great power in a decided resolution, when connected with right feeling. These two united form a strong character.

24. What kind of a man was Barnabas ? Doubtless he had many fine *natural* gifts, but his eminence did not *spring* from these ;—what proof have we of this ? No man

has *native* goodness enough to save him ;—by what are we saved ? When the gifts of grace are added to those of nature we see a useful and successful Christian ;—why was Barnabas an illustration of this ?

25. Barnabas desired help in this mission, and evidently needed a Jewish Christian *accustomed to intercourse with the heathen* ;—whom, therefore, did he seek ? Do you see the special wisdom of this choice ? What was it that had caused Saul to leave Jerusalem and return to his native city ? In view of that fact, why was Antioch an inviting field ?

26. How long did these two labor together at Antioch ? With whom did they co-operate ? Any one who considers the condition of those brought up under the corruptions of heathenism, will see that these two teachers had enough to do ;—in what respects ? What new name did the followers of Jesus here receive ? They had been accustomed to call each other *disciples, believers, saints, brethren* ; the Jews had called them *Nazarenes* and *Galileans* ;—by whom, then, was this new name probably given ?

27. To the Christians of Jerusalem Antioch became a place of great attraction ;—what indication do we see of this here mentioned ?

28. One of these brethren is mentioned by name ;—whom ? What did he prophesy ? How did he become possessed of his knowledge ? When was his prophecy fulfilled ?

29. History shows us that the calamity raged especially in Judea. To whom did the Christians of Antioch resolve to send relief ? *To what extent* was this resolution adopted ? By what *rule* did each man determine his amount of contribution ?

30. They were not content with *votes or resolutions* ;—

how much further did they go? Whom did they employ as almoners? The disciples of Antioch had not received money or temporal blessings from Jerusalem, but what *greater* benefits did they thus acknowledge? These latter blessings constitute “the true riches;”—how does Christ bid us estimate their value? Matt. vi. 19, 20. Every man should seek these for himself;—when? Matt. vi. 33. These blessings are *enduring*, and when we receive the gospel we obtain all in one. What does the apostle Peter teach on this point? 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

CHAPTER XII.

LESSON.—1-23.

King Herod's Persecution of the Church—Death of James—Imprisonment and Deliverance of Peter—God's Judgment on Herod—Spread of the Gospel.

1. THE course of the narrative now returns to the church at Jerusalem;—under whose dominion was the country at that time? This man was grandson of Herod the Great, who sought to destroy “the babe of Bethlehem”—nephew to Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist—the brother of Herodias, who bade her daughter ask for the head of John, and father of Agrippa, who heard Paul's celebrated discourse. This Herod had obtained the favor of the Roman emperor, and now, having been made king over his grandfather's dominions, the power of the Herodian family was concentrated in him. Jewish blood ran in his veins, and it pleased the Jews to be ruled by him rather than by a Roman procurator. How did he treat the Christian church?

2. What apostle did he murder? In what manner? Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, and the Jews did not practice it.

3. How did this martyrdom affect the Jews? How did Herod show his sympathy with them? Herod cherished the nation's prejudices, but was chiefly influenced by his love of popularity. The Jewish Sanhedrim had failed in all their efforts against Peter, and they were glad to see a king try his hand in the work of persecution. It was now the spring of the year, about the month of April;—how do we know this? What kind of bread was then used? According to what law? Ex. xii. 15.

4. Herod would not interrupt a religious solemnity by a public execution;—on that account what did he do with Peter? To whose care did he intrust him? A quaternion was a guard of four soldiers;—how many men were set to watch the apostle? Herod expected to enjoy a grand display of his royal power after the *Passover*. The word *Easter* ought not to have had any place in the *English* translation. It is an old Anglo-Saxon term, first applied to a heathen festival which was celebrated in the month of April, and was afterward applied in England to a Christian festival, celebrated in honor of the resurrection, about the same time of the year.

5. The church in Jerusalem was in great distress on Peter's account; nevertheless, they offered no petition for him to the king or council;—what *did* they do for him?

6. The time set for the public execution of Peter drew near. During the previous night how was he guarded? In a quaternion of soldiers, two of them were fastened to the prisoner, and two kept the door. In what manner did Peter pass the night? We have read of one period when Peter could not sleep even on the softest couch, but “wept

bitterly;" now he can sleep in a dungeon How can we account for this difference?

7. Then one entered the prison without asking leave of the king or guard;—who was this? What supernatural sign accompanied him? How did he rouse the apostle from his slumber? What did he bid him do? The chains were not wrenched off;—what became of them?

8. Peter obeyed the command, but now he is prevented from acting in *too great haste*;—how? What further direction was given?

9. Peter was so astonished that he could scarcely credit his senses;—how is this denoted?

10. When they passed two wards, or guards, to what did they come? What miracle was witnessed here? No human hand was seen;—what power was manifest? The angel's mission was soon fulfilled;—where did he leave Peter? The light of the moon was now sufficient to guide the steps of Peter;—what reason have we to think so?

11. When Peter recovered his self-possession he knew that this was not a trance, like that at Joppa;—to what conclusion did he arrive?

12. He paused to reflect;—to what house did he then proceed? Who were assembled there? The lady of this house was a sister of Barnabas. How does this appear? Col. iv. 10.

13. As Peter knocked at the outer gate, a confidential member of the household came to listen;—who was this?

14. Those who heard the raps at the gate at that hour probably supposed that an officer of Herod was there. What a happy surprise followed! What effect did it produce?

15. How did those within the house answer Rhoda's message? Her words and manner soon convinced them

that *some* extraordinary thing had occurred ;—what was their conjecture ? It was a common belief that each person has a guardian angel, who can assume his appearance and speak in similar tones of voice. Many suppose that their expression sprung from this belief. Probably, however, they meant to express the apprehension that Peter was already dead, and that this was his apparition.

16. Nevertheless, the knocking continued ;—what followed ?

17. Doubtless their expressions of joy were loud and impassioned ;—how did Peter calm them ? What information did he give them ? He remembered the absent, and wished to encourage them ;—how did he show this ? To whom did he especially refer ? This was the son of Alphæus, author of the epistle, and called by Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, one of the “pillars” among the apostles.

18. The narrative now returns to the prison, where the astonishment was as great as that at the house of Mary ;—what was the subject of warm discussion ?

19. In what did the efforts of the king fail ? He would not allow that God had interposed by a miracle to favor the Christians ;—on whom did he lay the blame ? How did he gratify his vengeance ? About this time he had occasion to go to Cesarea. This is mentioned in order to introduce the narrative of Herod’s death.

20. With whom had Herod been displeased ? They were devoted to commerce, not to agriculture ;—whence did they procure their food ? They had no desire for war ;—by what means did they dispose Herod’s mind to peace ? Peace was best for both parties, as these sea-ports opened a market for the produce of Herod’s territory.

21. On this occasion Herod made a great display ;—in

what manner? He boasted of his own magnanimity. The Tyrians and Sidonians knew his vanity, and answered in shouts of flattery;—what did they exclaim?

22. This idolatry pleased Herod;—how was it punished? Josephus tells us that he exclaimed, “I, your God, am ordered to depart this life.” What was the nature of his disease? It was so sudden, direct, and extraordinary, that all regarded it as a judgment of God. How did it end? Behold! a king is conquered by worms. His magnificence is turned into corruption.

23. What followed the death of Herod?

24. What is mentioned of Barnabas and Saul? In these events what Scripture was fulfilled? Ps. lxxvi. 10.

CHAPTER XIII.

LESSON I.—1-16.

Paul and Barnabas sent forth on a Mission to the Heathen—Preach in the Isle of Cyprus—Visit Paphos—A Sorcerer Struck with Blindness—Sergius Paulus Converted—Paul Preaches at Antioch, in Pisidia

1. A NEW era here commences. A Christian church engages in the work of sending missionaries to the heathen. What church is spoken of in this verse? It was highly endowed with gifts;—what class of persons were in it? Who is the first mentioned in the list? Do you remember of what place he had been a resident? Who is the second? He is believed by many to have been that Cyrenian who shared the weight of the cross with Jesus on his way to Calvary. Luke xxiii. 26. The third one

here mentioned was a Cyrenian, that is, a man of Cyrene, on the coast of Africa;—what was his name? The fourth had been a schoolfellow, or companion, with Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee;—what was his name? The fifth was one whose history we have already considered. The arrangement of names is probably in the order of *age*, as is suggested by the editor of Calmet.

2. While these men were engaged in religious worship what command was given by the Holy Spirit concerning two of them?

3. These men were called of God to be missionaries to the heathen;—in what manner was this call recognized by the church? Of what was laying on of hands the sign? We read of *fasting* here as well as in other places in the New Testament; but we have read nothing of fasting by rule, of fasting on Fridays, or forty days during Lent, or eating fish instead of flesh. The early Christians fasted whenever they thought that fasting would be profitable as an aid to devotion. What did Christ say on this subject? Matt. ix. 14, 15; Matt. vi. 16-18.

4. Although the church set apart these missionaries, whence was it that their commission came? What do we learn from this respecting the *personality* of the Holy Spirit? The missionaries immediately left Antioch for the sea-port, fifteen miles distant;—what is it called? To what island did they sail?

5. They landed at a port on the southeast part of the island;—what is it called? Where did they preach the word of God? In order that they might give themselves to their work they took with them one who could attend to their secular affairs;—who was this? What relation was he to Barnabas? Col. iv. 10.

6. They traveled across the island to the western coast;

—to what place did they come? It was the residence of the Roman proconsul. They were met there by a magician;—of what nation? He was called after the name of his father;—what was that?

7. With whom was this fortune-teller staying? This proconsul was a sensible man, who desired to obtain a knowledge of the true religion. It is probable that he had regarded this Jewish magician as able to give him information respecting the Jewish religion. When he heard that two religious teachers had arrived what did he do? From what motive?

8. We have here the sorcerer's name in Arabic;—what is it? He was jealous of the apostles' influence over the Roman governor;—on that account what did he do?

9. As Saul is now among Romans, Luke mentions the *Roman form* of his name;—what was that? This different mode of pronouncing names is common in our day; thus the English name John is called by the French Jean, and by the Dutch Hans. Toward the sorcerer it was necessary for Paul to use great severity;—under what *influence* did he speak to him?

10. He described the character of Elymas by four severe epithets;—what were they? Of what kind of *misrepresentation* does Paul accuse Elymas?

11. We are all bound to be careful not to judge others harshly. But Paul *knew* this man's character, and now he shows that God approved his judgment;—how? What calamity followed? How did Elymas show that this calamity was *real*? Such blindness does not always follow the perversion of religious truth, but blindness of another kind often does;—of what kind is that? 2 Cor. iv. 4.

12. What effect had this miracle on the Roman proconsul? He saw that Paul's sentence was not an imprecation

of vengeance;—how, then, must he have regarded it? Paul's severe sentence is not recorded for our imitation;—why not? If men now pervert the truth, or oppose it, they may not suffer a punishment like that of Elymas;—of what, however, are they in danger? 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

13. Paul and his company left Paphos. They left Elymas blind and Sergius enlightened. They sailed away from the isle of Cyprus, and came to the first port on the continent of Europe;—what was its name? Here John Mark left them;—where did he go? He was again with Paul, after some time, as a fellow-worker;—what proof is there of this? Col. iv. 10, 11; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

14. The two who had set out together from Antioch, in Syria, now came to another Antioch;—where was that? There were many Jews here;—what proof is there of it? On the Saturday after their arrival where did Paul and Barnabas go?

15. The Jewish law was read publicly. It was divided into fifty-two sections, in order that the whole might be read in a year. After the lesson of the day what invitation did Paul and Barnabas receive? From whom did it come? The strangers were recognized as Jews;—what proof is there of this?

16. Paul was, doubtless, glad of the invitation, for he loved to preach the gospel. Having waved his hand so as to invite the attention of all, how did he commence his discourse? His style of address was adapted to gain the favor of his audience;—why? It was Paul's delight to preach to the Gentiles;—yet how did he feel toward the Jews? Rom. x. 1. What did he regard as his peculiar mission? Rom. xv. 16. The conversion of the heathen, which was the great work commenced by Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, is still to be carried forward. If we are Chris-

tians indeed, we will be careful to do our share in relation to it.

CHAPTER XIII.

LESSON II.—17-52.

Paul's Sermon in the Synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia—Public Attention awakened—Opposition of the Jews—Persecution.

17. LIKE Stephen, Paul begins his sermon with Jewish history. To what patriarchs did he refer, as the founders of the nation? In what land did the people dwell as strangers? What did God then do for them? What *figure* is here used to denote God's power? By whom was the deliverance here spoken of accomplished?

18. After being delivered whither did the people go? How long did they remain there? *Why* did they remain so long? Deut. viii. 2, 3. The afflictions to which *we* are subjected are designed for a similar purpose;—how should we regard them? Heb. xii. 5, 6.

19. How many nations were subdued in Canaan? What was the character of these nations? Deut. xviii. 10-12. After these conquests, how was the land divided?

20. In those ages what kind of government prevailed in Israel? Who was the last of this class of rulers?

21. The people desired a change in the mode of government;—how was it brought about? 1 Sam. viii. 4, 5. Who was the first king? How long did he reign?

22. Who succeeded Saul on the throne of Israel? *Why* did God remove Saul? 1 Sam. xv. 23. What testimony did God give respecting David? Observe, this testimony respecting David refers to his official character as king. He guided

the government by the divine law, and opposed all idolatry ; but when in private life he did wrong, God expressed his displeasure against him. From what employment was David exalted to the throne ? Ps. lxxviii. 70-72.

23. The Jews all understood that the Messiah was to be a descendant of David ;—what did they testify on this point ? Matt. xxii. 42. What promise of a *perpetual* kingdom was given to David ? 2 Sam. vii. 16. Christ, who was of the line of David, was a king and is now a king ;—in what sense, temporal or spiritual ?

24. Who went before Christ to prepare his way ? How did he do it ?

25. As the herald fulfilled his work, some suspected that he was the Messiah ;—what was his testimony on that point ?

26. Paul now makes his appeal to the whole of the audience, first to the Jews ;—what did he call them ? He includes also the Gentiles ;—in what way ? What does he call the gospel ?

27. He speaks of the crucifixion of Jesus ;—to what cause does he attribute it ? What means had the Jews of knowing the character of the Messiah ? Men may be familiar with the *letter* of the Bible, and yet be ignorant of its true meaning. How is it that true Christians know the meaning of the Scripture ? John vi. 45. Why were the Jews blamable for their ignorance ?

28. They pretended to bring Jesus to *trial* as a malefactor ;—what was the result ? What did Pilate, the Roman governor, declare on this point ? How did they alarm Pilate so as to induce him to comply with their request ?

29. After having unconsciously fulfilled the prophecies by the crucifixion of Jesus, what did they do with him ? Who officiated as friends at his burial ?

30. The government sealed the tomb, and set a watch, but all in vain;—why?

31. After the resurrection, how many days was Jesus seen? By whom? On that account what were all these qualified to be?

32. By what name does Paul designate the gospel? It was no new theme. How far back in history does he date its origin?

33. What prophecy was thus fulfilled? The prophecy here quoted is used in a *declarative* sense, that is, “This day I *declare* that I have begotten thee.” How does Paul express this idea more fully? Rom. i. 4.

34. What other promise did the resurrection of Jesus fulfill? This is quoted from Isa. lv. 3.

35. Still another promise was fulfilled by the resurrection;—what was that? This may be found in Ps. xvi. 10, and we have already seen that Peter quoted it in one of his discourses. Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, but he returned to corruption;—in what respect, then, was the resurrection of Jesus distinguished from all others?

36. Some might have thought that the promise referred to David himself;—how does Paul guard against that objection? Where was David’s sepulcher? Acts ii. 29.

37. One fact showed that the promise was fulfilled in Jesus;—what was that?

38. Paul now passes from *history* to *doctrine*. What great doctrine does he now declare? This is the *chief* doctrine of the gospel.

39. What great blessing comes from receiving this gospel into the heart? In what respect is it superior to the Jewish economy? There were some sins, such as murder and idolatry, for which the Mosaic code provided no atonement or pardon. Can this be said of the gospel? Will

the gospel save us if we have no faith in it? Observe, this doctrine of justification by faith is the chief theme of Paul's epistles. The doctrine is this: *Having broken God's law we can not justify ourselves before him; but if we penitently confess our sinfulness, and trust in the mediation of Christ (instead of trusting to our own merits), then, for the sake of Christ, God will accept us, and grant us his favor as freely as if we had never sinned.*

40. In closing his discourse, what caution did the apostle utter?

41. Whose words did he apply to the case before him? Hab. i. 5.

42. This sermon took the Jews by surprise. When Paul rose to speak they thought of him only as a Jew. The *new doctrine* amazed them. They appear to have left the synagogue in silence. What was done by the Gentile part of the audience?

43. All did not go at once to their homes;—who followed Paul and Barnabas? To what were they exhorted?

44. On the following Saturday, what kind of an assembly did these missionaries have? What *motive* brought the people together?

45. The great influence of the Christian missionaries excited the envy and anger of some;—who were they? How did they express their feelings?

46. The missionaries were not frightened by these things;—how did they meet the emergency? These Jews acted as if they had no souls to care for. What did the missionaries say of their conduct? The Jews might reject the gospel, but they could not stop its progress. What did the apostles say of their hopes of success?

47. The Jews had no idea of a system of religion fitted

to be universal ;—what prophecy did Paul quote respecting this? Isa. xlix. 6. Nothing excited their anger more than to be told that the heathen should be brought, under the Messiah, to the enjoyment of the same privileges as they themselves possessed.

48. Some, however, hailed this truth as good news ;—who were they? The apostles were not inflated with their success, as if *their* power or eloquence had converted men. To whom did they attribute this great change?

49. What was the success of the gospel in that part of Asia?

50. What were the Jews impelled to do? What was the result of their measures?

51. The apostles felt that they had done their duty, and that if these people perished, none but themselves were responsible. By what act did they express this? What precept did the apostles obey in doing this? Matt. x. 14. They then traveled southeastward to the capital of Lycaonia ;—what was its name? That place is now called Konieh.

52. The Christians were soon met by storms of persecution. In what state of mind were they? What words of Christ were thus fulfilled? Matt. v. 10-12.

CHAPTER XIV.

LESSON 1-28

Paul and Barnabas expelled from Iconium.—A Miracle of Healing at Lystra.—They are worshiped as Gods.—Again they are persecuted.—They revisit the Churches.—They return to Antioch, in Syria, and present to the Church a Report of their Missionary Tour.

1. ICONIUM was an important place ;—do you remember

where it was situated? What place did Paul and Barnabas first seek in Iconium? What was the effect of their preaching?

2. In most congregations there are two classes, believers and unbelievers. In this synagogue, what did the unbelieving Jews set themselves to do?

3. In order to remove these prejudices, what did these missionaries do? How did God sanction their work?

4. Two parties were formed among the people;—how are they described?

5. Jews and heathen united against Christ's ministers;—what did this combination propose to do? Stoning to death was the penalty for blasphemy. The Jews called the Christian doctrine blasphemy. What was the charge against Stephen in relation to this point? Acts vi. 13.

6. Being informed of the plot, what did the missionaries do? What command did they thus fulfill?

7. At Lystra and Derbe how were the apostles engaged?

8. At Lystra an object of pity attracted their attention; how is he described? The word *cripple* comes from the old spelling of the word *creeple*, meaning one who can only *creep*, not walk erect.

9. This man was a hearer of Paul. What did the apostle perceive in him? The phrase here used means "faith to be saved." God, who had deprived the poor man of the use of his feet, gave him a heart to believe. On Elymas Paul had wrought a miracle of judgment *against the will* of the sorcerer; now he would work a miracle of mercy which the cripple much desired.

10. What command did Paul pronounce? The heathen sorcerers muttered their charmed words in low tones;—how did Paul speak? Thus he openly pledged God's

power;—what did this show? What was the immediate effect?

11. When the people saw the work what did they exclaim? It was a sort of Assyrian Greek that they spoke. The shout was somewhat like that which the Cesareans raised in honor of Herod;—in what respect?

12. They not only called the missionaries “gods,” but gave them names derived from the Greek mythology;—what were they? Mercury was their god of eloquence;—why did they apply that name to Paul? Jupiter was their “lord of all the gods;” Mercury was his son and messenger. Paul was probably young enough to be deemed the son of Barnabas. The statues of Jupiter represented him as a venerable and full-bearded man, and the appearance of Barnabas may have suggested the likeness.

13. At Lystra there was a temple in honor of Jupiter;—what was the priest of it about to do?

14. How did the missionaries express their abhorrence of this proposal?

15. They appealed to the reason of the people;—with what question? They asserted that they were of the same mortal nature as others;—how did they express this? The word “passions” here denotes a *liability to sufferings and death*; it is derived from a word which means to suffer, and has no reference to those mental states such as *anger, joy*, etc., which we often express by the word *passions*. What did they call the heathen gods? What did they say was the object of their mission?

16. For many ages God had sent no special revelation to the heathen world;—how did Paul express this?

17. And yet he gave them some light and knowledge;—from what sources? What, then, is the voice of nature to

the ear of reason respecting God? Probably these people had never before heard a clear testimony respecting the one God as the creator and benefactor of all. Like them, our own ancestors in Europe once worshiped idols;—what has caused us to differ from them?

18. The people were “mad upon their idols,” and loth to give up the notion that the gods had made them a visit;—what proof is there of this? We see the fidelity of these missionaries. A merely human policy might have suggested to them the purpose of letting the people have their way for the sake of gaining influence. With this view it was that Captain Cook allowed himself to be taken for Oro, the god of war, by the Sandwich Islanders, and worshiped with idolatrous ceremonies.

19. The scene is soon changed. The missionaries are followed by their former persecutors;—from what places? What did these new comers persuade the people to do? To what extent did they carry their rage? The apostles had prepared the way for this by saying, “We are no gods.” Worldly wisdom would have said, “How much better to have passed off as gods than to have suffered such a fate.” How did Paul view this matter? Rom. v. 3. In what letter does Paul refer to this event? 2 Cor. xi. 25.

20. What a scene was this! An apostle prostrate on the ground, and a group of brethren around him bewailing him as one dead. But again they were astonished;—what did they behold? What bold step did the apostle then take? His return must have awed the multitude. Whither did he and Barnabas go on the morrow? This proved his recovery and his zeal.

21. How were they engaged in this new field? How were they rewarded? Observe, the phrase translated “taught many,” means literally, “made many disciples.”

What bold measure did the missionaries next carry into effect?

22. What was the effect of their interviews with the new converts at these places? How did they exhort them to perseverance? How did they guard them against despondency in time of trouble? Although Christianity was the religion of *miracles*, it was at the same time the religion of the *cross*.

23. The apostles organized and established churches. What officers were appointed? These officers were probably appointed like those already mentioned in Acts vi. 3. In what manner was that? How did the apostles commend the officers to God? These officers were appointed by the Lord;—for what purpose? Eph. iv. 11, 12.

24. Having performed this work, the apostles turned toward the sea-coast;—whither did they go?

25. Where did they next preach? What sea-port did they seek?

26. Whither did they return? There they had been set apart for their mission to the heathen;—in what way?

27. The missionaries made their report to those who had sent them out;—what body was that? We do not read that they said much about their persecutions and sufferings;—on what subject did they chiefly dwell?

28. Where did they remain for a time? We know not how long? As the event mentioned in the following chapter occurred more than five years afterward, probably the whole interval was passed in Syria and its capital. Paul preached the gospel in Illyria (Rom. xv. 19), perhaps, during this period. He suffered many things of which we have no particular account. 2 Cor. xi. 23–27. We see that the church of Antioch was a truly *missionary* church;—why? The work there begun is still unfinished;—what is our duty in relation to it?













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